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# HISTORICAL COMPOSITIONS IN THE R̥GVEDA A CRITICAL EXPOSITION



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By

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M. A.

*Under the Guidance of*

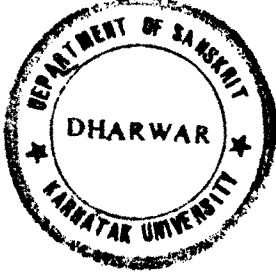
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## Certificate

I certify that this thesis "**HISTORICAL COMPOSITIONS  
IN THE RGVEDA - A CRITICAL EXPOSITION**" presented by  
Shri. Narasimha S. Bhat represents his original work and has  
not been submitted for any other Diploma or Degree in any  
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## Preface

It is the Universal truth that the Vedas, besides their having religio-philosophical importance, unfold the basic elements of various branches of Social Science and Physical Science. In this respect, the *Rgveda* has been widely regarded as an authoritative text on various philosophical and historical issues. No doubt, the traditional scholars, having found out the philosophical importance of the *Rgveda*, had written significant commentaries which are still available in the Oriental Libraries. So also, the scholars, eastern as well as western, have discovered historical elements in it. But there has been an unreconcilable gap between the views of scholars of these two groups.

At this juncture, I would like to express that I have made an humble attempt in thesis to reconcile both the views restoring the traditional importance of the *Rgveda*. In this way, the thesis marks a study of Rgvedic hymns in their socio-philosophical and historical perspective. Further, it is necessary to make it clear that the phrase "*historical compositions in the Rgveda*" of the title of the thesis, may give rise to the wrong notion of the Vedas as being composed, which however is not accepted by the traditional scholars. But it is not so. The word 'composition' is used here in the sense of "systematic arrangement of various elements together in a composite form."\*

The task of writing such a research work was made by the inspiring guidance of my revered teacher and Research Guide Dr. K.B.Archak, Reader, Department of Sanskrit, Karnatak University Dharwad. Therefore, I feel myself proud to extend my deep and respectful sense of gratitude to him.

I further offer my heartfelt thanks to my respected parents and sisters for their help and co-operation throughout my Ph.D. course.

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\* See. Oxford Advance Learner's Dictionary, (Fifth Edn.), Oxford University Press, Oxford, p-234.

I record my deep sense of reverence and sincere obligation to Dr. D.N.Shanbhag, Rtd. Professor of Sanskrit, Karnatak University Dharwad. I also thank to Dr. M.N.Joshi, Chairman, Dept of Sanskrit, Karnatak University Dharwad, and other teachers of the Department as well as University authorities, for having spared their valuable time to give me useful suggestions in the preparation of the thesis.

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**CHAPTER - I**  
**A BRIEF HISTORICAL SURVEY OF**  
**VEDIC LITERATURE**

Indian culture is original and creative. It is a very old culture. In ordinary language, no distinction is made between culture and civilization. The culture and civilization are used for each other. However, a peep into deeper meaning of these two terms convey that there is a narrow distinction between them. It is in this connection said : "In the literal sense, the term culture means cultivation and refers to the cultivation of mind and spirit. Culture may be defined as that refinement of the mind and intelligence which enables an individual to appreciate all that is good, true and beautiful in life. Culture is the sum-total of all those qualities which make a person gentleman." And, "civilization refers to the material progress of man. It is concerned with the methods by which human society has progressed from the primitive conditions to the present advancement. It shows as to how man has established his control over nature and added to the happiness and prosperity of humanity."<sup>1</sup> Another feature of the Indian culture is that it is a living culture for welfare and not a meaningless culture. Glimpses of

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1. V.D. Mahajan : *Political and Cultural History of Ancient India*, G.S. Sharma for S.Chand and Co., Ram Nagar, New Delhi, 1962, pp-1-2.



living examples of Indian culture can be seen in every walk of life of human beings even during the modern times.

The important sources of ancient Indian history and culture are literature, archeology, foreign accounts and tribal legends. Ancient Indian literature is so varied and rich in many respects, that it is difficult to exhaust even this source. Ancient Indian literature is partly sacred and partly secular; that is, the Vedic literature is the main source of all subsequent cultural manifestations in India. Since the time immemorial, scholars, poets, philosophers and historians have declared with one voice that the Vedas are the main source of all cultural manifestations in India. The concepts of *Ṛta*, *Brahman*, the *Puruṣārtha*, the spirit of sacrifice and service, the noble aspirations of political and social harmony and co-operation as well as the enlightening principles of art and science these and other fundamentals of the Indian culture or **Hindu Dharma** were formulated by the Vedic *Ṛsis* and assiduously developed by succeeding generations of thinkers and scholars. Thus, the Indian culture has gathered, through the ages, its richness and strength from several diverse sources ; but its main fountain is the Vedic canon.

Recently, however, this fact has been challenged by some western scholars and their Indian followers who take up the study of Vedic culture with a set of facile assumption and hypotheses furnished by Archaeology, Philology, Anthropology and comparative Mythology, all of which are, by their very nature, rather speculative than definitive. The earliest literature of India is purely of a religious kind. The patience and industry of a multitude of scholars have, however, succeeded in extracting from its useful bits of history.



At this juncture, one should know flawless definition of the Veda. To begin with, the term Veda means knowledge derived from the root 'Vid' (to know). Also the term Veda denotes the texts containing the most sacred and authoritative knowledge, the texts whose authority can never be questioned, and which are the last tribunal in matters of dispute whether in religion or philosophy or social customs.

The Vedic literature may be divided into three great divisions, the *mantras* or *Samhitās*, the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Sūtras*. The *mantras*<sup>2</sup> and the *Brāhmaṇas* are called *Śruti*, while the *Sūtras* are called *Smṛtis*. The *Śruti* is what is heard as opposed to what is composed ; it is revealed scripture, and self-authoritative, not composed by any human being. The *Rṣis*<sup>3</sup> of the hymns of the Veda are thus called *Mantradṛṣṭāras* 'the seers of the *Mantras*'. They are the mediums of communication between gods and men. The *Smṛtis* imbibe the traditional works of human origin, which are solely based on the *Śrutis*. The *Smṛti* applies not only to the *Sūtra* works but also to the metrical codes of Manu, Yājñvalkyā, etc.

The Vedic canon, comprises four great sections, viz. the *Rgveda*, the *Yajurveda*, the *Sāmaveda*, and the *Atharvaveda*. Again, each of these has three main divisions - the *Samhitās*, the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Āraṇyakas*. The *Samhitās* and *Brāhmaṇas* are loosely designated as '*Karma-Kāṇḍa*' the portion pertaining to rituals. The *Āraṇyakas* designated as '*Upāsanā-Kāṇḍa*', the portion relating to meditation, includes the *Upaniṣds* forming '*Jñāna-kāṇḍa*' portion dealing with supreme knowledge.

2. मंत्रा मननात्। Yāska, *Nirukta*, VII.13, Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi, 1967, p.138.

3. साक्षात्कृतधर्माण ऋषयो बभूवुः। Yāska, *Nirukta*, I-20.

As far as *Samhitā* portion is concerned, there are four principal *Samhitās* related to four Vedas : *Ṛgveda Samhitā*, *Yajurveda Samhitā*, comprising *Taittirīya Samhitā* or *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda* and *Vājasaneyi Samhitā* or *Śukla Yajurveda*; *Sāmaveda Samhitā*, and the *Atharvaveda Samhitā*. Besides these, there are three other *Samhitās* of lesser importance, viz. The *Kāthaka*, the *Kapiṣṭhala-Kaṭha*, and the *Maitrāyaṇī Samhitās* of the *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda*. These are collections of sacred hymns in *mantra* of different metres, and are mostly addressed in prayer to various gods and goddesses. There are, however, four *Samhitās*, which are notably different from one another, and each of which has several recensions. These are:

1. The *Ṛgveda Samhitā* - A collection of hymns.
2. The *Yajurveda Samhitā* - A collection of sacrificial formulas.
3. The *Sāmaveda Samhitā* - A collection of songs mostly taken from the *Ṛgveda*.
4. The *Atharvaveda Samhitā* - A collection of spells and charms.

This four-fold division of the *Samhitās* evidently speaks of an elaborate development of the sacrificial rites. Since, even the simplest sacrifice requires the four principal priests related to four Vedas-*Hotṛ*, *Udgātṛ*, *Adhvaryu* and *Brahmā*. Originally there were only three Vedas.<sup>4</sup> The *Atharvaveda* has been regarded as later development of Vedic canon. In the *Brāhmaṇas* view, the Vedas and the rituals, enjoined in them, are the correlates of the cosmic system. The *mantras* are the earth, the *Yajus* are the air and the

4. त्रयी वै विद्या । ऋचोयजूषि सामानीयमेवर्चोऽस्याह्यर्चन्ति योऽर्चति स वागेवर्चो वाचा ह्यर्चति सोऽन्तरिक्षमेव यजूषि ध्यौः सामानि । *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, IV-6-7-1.

The Research Institute of Ancient Scientific Studies, Delhi, Vols-I-III, 1969.



*Sāmans* are the sky. Correspondingly, Agni belongs to the earth, Indra or Vāyu to the air and Sūrya to the sky.<sup>5</sup> Hence, by the *mantras*, man conquers the earth, by the *Yajus*, the air, and by the *Sāmans*, the sky,<sup>6</sup> and, in this process, also propitiates Agni, Indra and Sūrya. Hence, by this triad, he conquers the whole cosmos consisting of the three regions of the earth, atmosphere and sky. This is possible through the performance of the *Soma* ritual, since in it, all the three Vedas combine.<sup>7</sup>

The *Brāhmaṇas* are prose works, containing detailed descriptions of the sacrificial rites and the modes of their performance. Not only have all the four Vedas their separate *Brāhmaṇas* but even different schools of the same Veda have different *Brāhmaṇas*. The *Ṛgveda* has two *Brāhmaṇas*. The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* relating to the *Śākala* school and the *Kuṣṭakī Brāhmaṇa* represents the *Bāṣkala* school. To the *Sāmaveda* belong several *Brāhmaṇas* of which the *Tāṇḍya* or *Pañcaviṃśa*, and the *Ṣaḍviṃśa* are well-known. To the *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda* has the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* which is but a continuation of the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, and the *Śukla Yajurveda* has the *Śatapatha* in two schools. To the *Atharvaveda* belongs the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* which consists of two books. It toto, the *Brāhmaṇas* represent no doubt, a most interesting phase in the history of Indian thought.

The *Āraṇyakas* are works to be read in the forest. The *Āraṇyakas* and *Upaniṣads* often form the concluding portion of the

5. अग्निः प्रथिवीस्थानः । वायुर्वेन्द्रो वान्तरिक्षस्थानः । सूर्यो द्युस्थानः । Yāska, *Nirukta*, VII-5.

6. इममेव लोकमृचा जयति । अन्तरिक्षं यजुषा । दिवमेव साम्ना । *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, IV-6-7-2.

7. सैषा त्रयी विद्या सौम्येऽध्वरे प्रयुज्यते । *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, IV-6-7-1.

several *Brāhmaṇas*. The *Upaniṣads* mark an absolutely different path from that of the works that preceded them in the Vedic canon. The *Upaniṣads* like the Vedas, are however regarded as *Śruti* texts. They are popularly called the *Vedānta*. The total number of *Upaniṣads* is very large. Of these, *Aitareya* and *Kauṣṭhiki* belong to the *R̥gveda* ; the *Kaṭha*, the *Taittiriya*, the *Kaivalya*, the *Śvetāśvatara* and the *Nārāyaṇa* to the *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda* ; the *Īśa*, the *Bṛahadāraṇyaka* and the *Jābāla* to the *Śukla Yajurveda* ; the *Kena* and the *Chāndōgya* to the *Sāmaveda* ; and the *Praśna*, the *Muṇḍaka*, *Māṇḍukya* and the *Nṛsimhatāpani* to the *Atharvaveda*.

Thus, it may be seen that these three major classes of Vedic literature, the *Brāhmaṇas*, the *Āraṇyakas* and the *Upaniṣads* mark three consecutive stages, not only in the Indian thought in general but in the life of every individual. The *Brāhmaṇas* advocating the actual observances of the sacrifice are meant for the *Grahastha* ; the *Āraṇyakas* whose subject is the allegorical sacrifice, for the *Vānaprastha* and the *Upaniṣads* purely philosophic for the men of wisdom *Sanyāsins*. They mark the three distinct paths to *Nihśreyas*, viz. *Karma*, *Upāsanā* and *Jñāna*.

Further, the last phase of the Vedic literature consists of *Sūtra* section. The *Sūtra* literature forms a connecting link between the Vedic and post-Vedic literature. The most important works belonging to the *Sūtra* literature are the six *Vedāṅgas*. These are, *Śikṣā* (pronunciation), *Chandas* (metre), *Vyākaraṇa* (grammar), *Nirukta* (etymology), *Jyotiṣa* (astronomy), and *Kalpa* (ceremonial). The *Vedāṅgas* have been intended to help the understanding of the Vedic texts. In course of time distinct schools of thought came



into existence for a systematic study of the various branches of Vedic knowledge. Those schools evolved special texts of their own, known as the *Sūtras*. The *Kalpasūtras* are the manuals on rituals, and there are four divisions of them. The *Śrautasūtras* deal with the rules relating to great sacrifices. The *Gṛhyasūtras* deal with the rules relating to domestic rights. The *Dharmasūtras* deal with *Dharma* or codes of laws. The *Śulvasūtras* deal with the measurement of *Yajñamaṇṭapas* and *Yajñavedis*. Following is the chart of entire Vedic literature under specific heads :

Veda	Śākhā	Brāhmaṇa	Araṇyaka	Upaniṣads
R̥g	Śākala Bāṣkala	Aitareya Kauṣītakī	Aitareya Kauṣītakī	Aitareya Kauṣītakī
Sāma	Jaiminiya Rāṇāyaṇīya Kautuma	Pañcaviṃśa Ṣaḍviṃśa Jaiminiya Upaniṣad Chāndogya	-	Chāndogya Kena
Kṛṣṇa Yajur	Taittirīya Maitrāyaṇī Kāṭhaka Kapiṣṭhala kaṭha	Taittirīya	Taittirīya	Taittirīya Maitrāyaṇī Kāṭha Śvetāśvatara
Śukla Yajur (Vājasaneyī Samhitā)	Kāṇva Mādyanandina	Śatapatha	Śatapatha	Bṛhadāraṇyaka Īśa
Atharva	Śaunaka Paippalāda	Gopatha	-	Mandūka Prašna Mandūkya

The Veda as a whole, has been traditionally recognised as non-human composition, the eternal store-house of highest knowledge, and as endowed with supernatural efficacy. Inspiration and intallibility are the two chief attributes of the Veda. From the *Atharvaveda* and the *Purāṇas*, a large number of passages may be quoted bearing on this subject, which all agree in preaching that



the Veda had a divine or mystic origin. The Veda deals with something supernatural which cannot be made known by ordinary perception and inference. This is clear from the following extract from the *Vedārth Prakāśa* of *Mādhavāchārya* on the *Taittirīya Yajurveda*:

इष्टप्राप्त्यनिष्ट परिहारयोरलौकिकमुपायं यो ग्रन्थो वेदवति स वेदः ।  
अलौकिकपदेन प्रत्यक्षानुमाने व्यावर्त्येते ।<sup>8</sup>

The Naiyāyikas, while admitting the unquestionable authority of the Vedas, assert that they are the works of *Īśvara*, the highest Self, who is all-pervading, free from desire and happiness etc. In the *Jaiminiyanyāyamālāvistara*, of *Vidyāraṇya* the idea of human-composition of the Veda is refused :

पौरुषेयं न वा वेदवाक्यं स्यात्पौरुषेयता । काठकादिसमाख्यानाद्वाक्यत्वाच्चान्यवाक्यवद् ।।

समाख्याद्यापकत्वेन वाक्यत्वं तु पराहतम् । तत्कर्त्रनुपलम्भेन स्यात्ततोऽपौरुषेयता ।।(I.1,25-26)

This view further is found to have been held by all post-Vedic scholars.

The *Vedāntins* too, argue that the Vedas are not of human origin. This *Apauruṣeyatva* is technically explained by them thus : “No. In the first place, connection with a person does not mean being uttered by a person, for even according to the *Pūrvamīmāṃsā* school of the *Kumārila Bhaṭṭa*. The Vedas would be connected with persons, beings handed down from one teacher to another. Nor does connection with a person mean having an origin due to a person, for that inference about the personal origin of the Vedas, which is approved by the logicians is condemned by our school as providing what is already established. But it is being the object of

8. Q.Dr. N.S. Anantarangachar, *Vaidika Sāhitya Caritre* (Kan), Mysore, 2001, p-32.

utterance that is independent of any utterance of the same kind. For instance, in the beginning of cosmic projection, the Lord produced Vedas having a sequence of words similar to that which had already existed in the Vedas in the previous cosmic projection, and not Vedas of a different type. Hence the Vedas, not being the object of utterance that independent of any utterance of the same kind, are not connected with a person. The utterance of the *Mahābhārata* etc. however, is not at all dependent on any utterance of the same kind. Hence they are connected with a person. Thus two kinds of verbal testimony have been determined, viz., that which is connected with a person, and that which is not.”<sup>9</sup> And, the beginning portion of the *Viṣṇutattvanirṇaya* of *Madhva* elucidates and establishes the theory of non-human composition of the Vedas, on the basis of the logic and scriptural texts.<sup>10</sup>

Besides, the aforesaid authoritativeness of the Vedas, there were many other schools of exegesis, most of which have now faded into oblivion. One such school was that of the *Aitihāsikās* who traced the historical personalities to the Vedic sources and located their activities in the settings of events with spatio-temporal contexts. For instance, *Aitihāsikās* hold that *Vṛtra* was an Asura, the son of *Tvaṣṭṛ*.<sup>11</sup> The *Aśvins* as two pious kings.<sup>12</sup> Another instance may

9. न हि तावत् पुरुषेण उच्चार्यमाणत्वं पौरुषेयत्वम्, गुरुमतेऽप्यध्यापक परम्परया पौरुषेयत्वापत्तेः। नापि पुरुषाधीनोत्पत्तिकत्वं पौरुषेयत्वम्, नैयायिकाभिमतपौरुषेयत्वानुमानेऽस्मदादिना सिद्धसाधनापत्तेः। किन्तु सजातीयोच्चारणनपेक्षोच्चारणविषयत्वम्। तथा च सर्गाद्यकाले परमेश्वरः पूर्वसर्गसिद्धिवेदानुपूर्वीसमानानुपूर्विकं वेदं विरचितवान्, न तु तद्विजातीयं वेदमिति सजातीयोच्चारणनपेक्षोच्चारणविषयत्वं पौरुषेयत्वं वेदस्य। भारतादीनान्तु सजातियोच्चारणमनपेक्षैवोच्चारणमिति तेषां पौरुषेयत्वम्। एवं पौरुषेयापौरुषेयभेदेन द्विविध आगमो निरूपितः। Dharmarāja Adhvarīndra, *Vedānta Paribhāṣā*, Ed. Swami Mādhavandanda, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, 1989 pp-14-15.

10. Madhva, *Viṣṇutattvanirṇaya*, ed. Prof. K.T. Pandurangi, Bangalore, 1992, pp-2-6.

11. तत्को वृत्रः। त्वाष्ट्रोऽसुर इत्यैतिहासिकाः। Yāska, *Nirukta*, II-16.

12. तत्कावश्विनौ। राजानौ पुण्यकृतावित्यैतिहासिकः। Yāska, *Nirukta*, XII-1.

be given: "They concealed the impartial lady from the mortals ; having made one of like appearance, they gave her to the sun. And Saranyu bore the Ásvins when that took place, and deserted the two twins."<sup>13</sup>

"They concealed the immortal lady from the mortals. Having made one of similar appearances, they gave her to the Sun. Saranyu supported the Ásvins when that took place, and deserted the two twins. 'The atmospheric (Indra) and the atmospheric speech (are meant) ; say the etymologists ; 'Yama and Yamī', say the historians. With reference to this, they relate a legend.

Saranyu daughter of Traṣṭr bore twins, Yama and Yamī, to Vivasvat the Sun. She having substituted another lady of similar appearance, and having assumed the shape of a mare, ran away. He, Vivasvat, the sun, having also assumed the shape of a horse, pursued her, and joined her. Thence the Ásvins were born. Manu was born from the lady of similar appearance".<sup>14</sup>

In their view, Devāpi and Śantanu, sons of Ṛṣiṣeṇa, mentioned in the *Rgveda*, were Kauravya princes. With reference to this, one may find the following legend : Devāpi and Śantanu, sons of Ṛṣiṣeṇa, were two brothers, who belonged to the clan of the Kurus, Śantanu, the younger brother, caused himself to be installed as

13. अपागूहन्नमृतां मर्त्येभ्यः कृत्वी सवर्णामददुर्विवस्वते ।

उताश्विनावभरद्यत्तदासिदजहा द्वा मिथुना सरण्यूः ॥ *Rgveda*, X-17-2

14. उपागूहन्नमृतां मर्त्येभ्यः कृत्वी सवर्णामददुर्विवस्वते । अप्यश्विनावभरत् यत्तदासीत् । अजहाद् द्वौ मिथुनौ सरण्यूः । मध्यमं च माद्यमिकां च वाचमिति नैरुक्ताः ॥ यमं च यमीं चेत्यैतिहासिकाः । तत्रेतिहासमाचक्षते । त्वष्ट्री सरण्यूर्विवस्वत आदित्याद्यमौ मिथुनौ जनयाज्चकार । स सवर्णामन्यां प्रतिनिधायश्वारूपं कृत्वा प्रादुर्भव । स विवस्वानादित्य आश्वमेव रूपं कृत्वा तामनुसृत्य संबभूव । ततोऽश्विनौ जज्ञाते । सवर्णयां मनुः । तदभिवादिन्येषर्भवति ॥ *Yāska, Nirukta*, XII-10.



king. Devāpi retired to practice austerities. From that time the god did not rain for twelve years in kingdom of Śantanu. The priests said to him, "Thou hast committed (an act of) unrighteousness. Because thou hast caused thyself to be installed as king, having put their elder brother aside, therefore the god does not rain in their kingdom." Then he, i.e. Śantanu, sought to invest Devāpi with sovereignty. To him said Devāpi 'Let me be thy priest and sacrifice for thee.'<sup>15</sup>

Here is this hymn expressed a desire for rain. The following is a stanza of this hymn.

"The seer Devāpi, son of Ṛṣiṣeṇa, acting as the performing priest, knew (how to obtain) the goodwill of gods. He caused the divine waters to flow from the upper to the lower ocean by means of rain."<sup>16</sup>

Yāska considers this narrative as a dialogue (*Sarṇvāda*), while Śaunaka treats it as *Itihāsa* (history).<sup>17</sup> However, the historical aspect of this episode is so strong that Durga is compelled to quote it along with the *Nairukta* view. The historians view is also quoted by Yāska in his remarks on the *Rgveda* X.82.2. According to *Aitiḥāsikas*, Viśvakarman mentioned in it, was the son of Bhuvana. He

15. तत्रेतिहासमाचक्षते । देवापिश्चाष्टिषेणः शंतनुश्च कौरव्यौ भ्रातरौ बभूवतुः । स शंतनु कनीयानभिषेचयांचक्रे । देवापिस्तपः प्रतिपेदे । ततः शंतनो राज्ये द्वादशवर्षाणि देवो न ववर्ष । तमूचुर्ब्राह्मणाः । अधर्मस्त्वया चरितः । ज्येष्ठं भ्रातरमन्तरित्याभिषेचितम् । तस्मात्ते देवो न वर्षतीति । स शंतनुर्देवापिं शिशिक्ष राज्येन । तमुवाच देवापिः । पुरोहितस्तेऽसानि । याजयानि च त्वेति । तस्यैतद् वर्षकामसूक्तम् । तस्यैषा भवति ।।

Yāska, *Nirukta*, II-10.

16. आष्टिषेणो होत्रमृषिर्नि षौदन्देवापिर्देवसुमतिं चिकित्वान् ।

स उत्तरस्मादधरं समुद्रमणो दिव्या असृजद्वर्षा अभि ।। *Rgveda* X-98-5

17. आह्वानं प्रति चाख्यानमितरेतरयोरिदम् ।

संवादं मन्यन्ते यास्क इतिहासन्तु शौनकः ।। Śaunaka, *Bṛhaddevatā*, VII-153.

Ed. A.A. Macdonell, Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi, 1994, p-91

sacrificed all beings in a universal sacrifice, sacrificing even himself at the end. But the *Ādhyātmavidins* treated him as the soul, controlling the seven senses; and the *Nairuktas* considered him as the Sun dominating over the seven luminaris.<sup>18</sup> The *Bṛhaddevatā* quotes about forty myths and legends about Vedic characters which must have been current among the *Aitihāsikas*. The Veda is, thus, the earliest collection of historical myths which later have been seen developed in the Great Epics like *Mahābhārata*, *Purāṇas*, etc.

In his commentary on *Mīmāṃsāsūtra*. 1.1.28. Śābarasvāmin cites the view of those, who consider the Veda as historical in character and hence subject to the process of time. They hold that the Vedic *mantras* have a definite existence in time and therefore cannot be treated as eternal. The expressions 'Babara Prāvāhaṇi desired', Kusurubinda Uddalki desire; demonstrate that the texts, mentioning them, cannot be anterior to Prāvāhaṇi and Auddālaki respectively and are thus relative to time.<sup>19</sup> Likewise, the allusions of specific persons in the Vedas and the naming of different recensions after individuals as *Kāṭhaka*, *Kālāpaka*, *Paippalādaka*, *Maudgala* prove that they observe some chronological sequence.<sup>20</sup>

18. विश्वकर्मा भौवनः सर्वमेधे सर्वाणि भूतानि जुहुवाञ्चकार। सः आत्मानमपि आन्ततः जुहुवाञ्चकार।

Yāska, *Nirukta*, X-26.

19. अनित्य दर्शनाच्च। *Mīmāṃsāsūtra*, I-1,28.

Śābara's comment :

जननमरणवन्तश्च वेदार्थाः श्रूयन्ते बबरः प्रावाहणिरकामयत, कुसुरुबिन्द औद्दालकिरकामयत इत्येवमादयः।

उद्दालकस्यापत्यं गम्यते औद्दालकिः यद्येवं प्रागौद्दालकिजन्मनो नायं ग्रन्थो भूतपूर्वः एवमप्यनीत्यता।

Q. S.K. Ramanatha Shastri, *Bṛhati of Prabhākara Miśra* (Tarkapāda), University of Madras, 1934. p.403.

20. वेदाश्चैके सन्निकर्षं पुरुषाख्याः। *Mīmāṃsāsūtra*, I-1,27

Śābara's comment : पुरुषेणा ही समाख्यायन्ते वेदाः - काठकं कालापकं, पैप्पलादकं, मौद्गलमिति।

Ibid., p.402.

There cannot be a word or sentence without a person, because the person is *Kartā* (agent) and the word is *Kārya* (effect).<sup>21</sup> The Vedas, having a linguistic conspectus consisting of words, must, therefore, be the creation of man.<sup>22</sup> Though the names of such personalities may have been lost to us.<sup>23</sup>

In fine, according to the historians, the Vedas are human compositions relative to time and place.

So far as the views held by the modern Vedic scholars in this matter are concerned, they may be reckoned as the significant literature in the history not only of the Indians but also the entire mankind. In addition to the hymns of religious, sacrificial and philosophical significance, the *R̥gveda* includes hymns of domestic rites, mythological poems, dialogues, panegyrics of kings, didactic compositions and songs that throw light on social institutions and activities, occupations and recreations. It is not proper to say that the Aryans of the *R̥gveda* were primitive; but in fact they were in a sufficiently advanced stage of civilization which is clearly proved by the contents of the hymns themselves. In this connection, to quote Max Muller: "In the history of the world, the Veda fills a gap which no literary work in any other language could fill. It carries us back to times of which we have no records anywhere and gives us the very words of a generation of men of whom otherwise we could form but the vaguest estimate by means of conjecture and inferences. As long as man continues to take an interest in the

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21. Ibid., न च पुरुषस्य शब्देनास्ति सम्बन्धोऽन्यदतः - कर्ता पुरुषः कार्यः शब्द इति ।

22. Ibid., तत्र पौरुषेयाश्चेद्वेदाः असंशयं पौरुषेय्यः चोदनाः ।

23. Ibid., अस्मर्यमाणोऽपि चोदनायाः कर्ता स्यात् ।

history of his race, and as long as we collect in the libraries and museums the relics of former ages, the first place in that long row of books which contain the records of the Aryan branch of mankind, will belong forever to the *Rgveda*.”<sup>24</sup>

To quote Winternitz : “There exists no more important source for the investigation of the earliest stages in the development of Indian religion, no more important source for the investigation of mythology of the Indo-European peoples, indeed of peoples in general, than these songs of the *Rgveda*.”<sup>25</sup>

Thus the Veda, the sole source of knowing the history of the ancient Indian culture. The *Rgveda* is the oldest record of the Aryans whose immediate descendants we are. It belongs to a period of thousand of years left from us, of which no other records, no monuments are available. It is indeed very fortunate that the *Rgveda*, though so old and voluminous in extent, has been preserved to us, in a form correct to a syllable, by oral tradition in India. In the *Rgveda* we are face to face with our ancestors, we see how they lived, how they spoke, how they thought, what religion and faith they professed, how they worshipped their gods, what their ideals were.

The Indian mind is the same in many respects, whether in the Vedic Age or present time. If it be asked, what that unifying principle is, which runs through all the several aspects of Indian life and temperament ? The reply is that it is the influence of the

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24. Max Muller, *Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, Chawkamba Sanskrit Series, Varanasi, 1968, p-63.

25. Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature*, Oriental Books Reprint Corporation, New Delhi-55, 1973, Vol.I, p-75.

Veda and Vedic Age, which has permeated all strata of Indians and which is seen in every little act of ours. Whether it be religion, whether it be philosophy, morals, literature and social habits, we detect everywhere its influence.

### **Historical Compositions in the *R̥gveda* :**

In the Vedic literature, there are two types of compositions which may be called historical. 1) Hymns or passages from which modern scholars have attempted to extract some historical events, materials conditions of the period, geographical or topographical details, etc.

2) Those that are unanimously accepted as forms of Vedic historiography ; these may be called historical compositions.

They reflect the ideas and attitudes of ancient thinkers regarding history. Attempts of modern scholars to discover some rudiments of history in the Vedic hymns, reveals their notions of history nurtured on the writings of European scholars of the Nineteenth Century.

The historical materials in the *R̥gveda Samhitā* involve the blending of mythological as well as historical characters and incidents in an inextricable confusion.

In a hymn of the *R̥gveda* I-63, addressed to Indra, the seer observes in the same breath that the demons Śuṣṇa and Vṛtra as well as the enemies of the historical kings Purukutsa and Sudās were overpowered by the god Indra.

A hymn IV-30 states that Śambara, Varcin, Arṇa, and Citraratha were crushed by Indra, that Turvaśa and Yadu were safely carried





over a flood, and that the enemies of kings Divodāsa and Dabhīti were destroyed.

The story of Turvayāṇa's delivery from his enemies, Kutsa, Āyu and the historical prince Atithigva, is found in hymns I-53 and V-18.

The hymn IX-61, addressed to *Soma*, refers to the overthrowing of Nintynine cities and Divodāsa's victory over Śambara, Turvaśa and Yadu.

Referring to the type of historical compositions as such a short extract (*Ṛv.* IV-42) may be quoted wherein it is described that Purukustsa, son of Durgaha was captured ; but his wife propitiated the seven sages as well as the gods Indra and Varuṇa and obtained a famous son Trasadasyu.

The hymn III-33 tells in the form of a dialogues between Viśvāmitra and 'the pair of mothers' Vipāś and Śutudrī, how the Bharatas engaged in a raid, were able to cross the rivers in high flood through the sage's prayers.

Victory of a king Abhyāvartin Cāyamāna over Vṛcivatsa and Turvaśa is recorded in VI-27 ; while hymn 26<sup>th</sup> of the same *Maṇḍala* refers to the destruction by Indra of Śusṇa for Kutsa, of Śambara for Divodāsa and Cumuri for Dabhīti.

The hymns of the seventh *Maṇḍala* in the *Ṛgveda* 18, 33 and 83 deal with the most famous battle of ten kings which otherwise called *Dāśarājñā*. This was the battle of a group of ten kings against the king Sudās who won a glorious victory over them on the banks of the Paruṣṇī river. The *Ṛṣi* vividly brings out successive stages of

the battle, the numbers and equipment of the troops as well as their military tactics.

The hymns VII-33 and III-53 are illustrations of the families of Vaśiṣṭha and Viśvāmitra respectively.

There are many other passages in the *Ṛgveda* that describe rivers, mountains, seas and deserts.

These historical passages are portions of prayers addressed to Indra, Soma, rivers and other deities. They also contain the myths and legends. An account of supernatural elements is also found therein.

#### **Vamśa, Gotra-Pravara types of Historical composition :**

##### **Vamśa :**

The ceremonies of the Vedic sacrificial ritual which form the entire subject-matter of the later *Samhitās* and *Brāhmaṇas*, implies a long succession of teachers through whom they were handed down from the most ancient down to comparatively recent times. It is to the period of the *Brāhmaṇas* which exhibit the first systematic exposition of the sacrificial ceremonies, that we can trace back the oldest genealogical lists (*vamśas*) of the Vedic teachers and their pupils. A mention of *Vamśa* is found at the end of the late *Śāṅkhayana Āraṇyaka* of the *Ṛgveda*. This consists of eighteen names beginnings with *Guṇākhyā Śāṅkhāyana* and ending with *Brahma* the self-existent one. On particular grounds, the names and succession of human teachers may be broadly accepted as a historical fact.

### **Gotra - Pravara :**

The *Gotra* and *Pravara* are found intimately connected with the social and religious system of the Vedic Aryans from an early period. These may be translated as respectively as 'family' and 'the illustrious ancestors'. It would seem that a very long interval separated the beginnings of the *gotra* and *Pravara* divisions from their systematic arrangement in the *Śrauta-Sūtras*. These old genealogical lists are shown as a substratum of historical reality.

### **The Gāthas and the Nārāśaṁsis :**

The *Gāthā*, means epic-song verse and is associated with the sages of the Kaṇva family of the *Bhṛguvāṅgīrasa* group, as well as with the family of Viśvāmitra. The *gātha* and *nārāśaṁsis* have their parallels, at least in part, in some hymns and portions of hymns in the *Rgveda*. The first instance is the *Dānastutis* (praises of gifts). The *gāthā* and *nārāśaṁsis* occupy an important place in the development of Indian historical literature. Apart from the *gāthās* to the gods, they may be proved by references in the Vedic *Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas* to relate to historical characters and incidents. Thus, Janamejaya, Pāriksita of the Kuru race, Marutta Āvikṣita king of the Pāñcāla and Bharata Duṣṣanti of the great Bharata tribe, are well-known celebrities in the later *Śamhitā* and *Brāhmaṇa* literature.

### **The Ākhyānas :**

The *Ākhyānas* of Śunaḥśepa, Purūravas etc., can be traced to some ancient tradition reflected in *Rgvedic* hymns. These hymns, by their dramatic quality, indicate the existence of semi-dramatic

and semi-epic *ākhyāna* literature, out of which, grew the later historical epics and dramas.

### **The Itihāsa and Purāṇa :**

The *Nirukta* and the *Bṛhaddevatā* trace *itihāsa* and *ākhyāna* to the *Ṛgveda*. These texts explain some *Ṛgvedic* hymns to be the mixtures of *ṛk*, *gāthā*, *itihāsa*, while three hymns at least are described as *itihāsa-sūktas* (I-165; VIII-91-2 & X-102). *Itihāsa* as a work of historical nature is mentioned by the *Atharvaveda* and the *Brāhmaṇas*, where, it means *Purāṇa* (ancient events). The *Nirukta* and the *Bṛhaddevatā* refer to *itihāsa* in this sense. *Itihāsa* is usually coupled with *Purāṇa* which means ancient lore. Indeed, the *gāthās*, *nārāśaṃsis* and *ākhyānas* together strengthened the *itihāsa-purāṇa* traditions.



## CHAPTER - II

### STRUCTURE OF ṚGVEDA

#### 1. The Arrangement of the Ṛgveda Saṁhitā

The *Ṛgveda Saṁhitā* is rather a group of *mantras* visualised by several seers of that age. The form on which the *Saṁhitā* of the *Ṛgveda* has come down to us clearly shows that the different *Sūktas* were brought together and systematically arranged long before. The different portions of the *Saṁhitā* represent various indications of language, vocabulary, style, grammar, metre and ideas.

The *Ṛgveda Saṁhitā* is a collection of 1,028 *Sūktas* (hymns) divided into ten *Maṇḍalas* (books). These 1,028 *Sūktas* include eleven *Vāṅmāyā Sūktas*. The number of *mantras* in a *Sūktas* varies from just one (I-99) to 58 (IX-97). The total number of *mantras* is 10,462; thus the average number of *mantras* per hymn is ten. These hymns are seen by various seers.

There are two ways of dividing the contents of the *Ṛgveda*, one into *Aṣṭakas*, *Adhyāyas* and *Vargas*, and the other into *Maṇḍalas*, *Anuvākas* and *Sūktas*. Of these, the former is popular among traditionalists because of the convenience of study. The *Ṛgveda Saṁhitā* is divided into eight *Aṣṭakas*, each *Aṣṭaka*

consists of eight *Adhyāyas* and each *Adhyāya* consists of several *Vargas*. A *Varga* being usually made up of five *mantras*, sometimes more and sometimes less. This is the division popular with the *Vaidikas* with whom a *Varga* is the measure of a lesson. This division is purely mechanical.

The second type of division, however, though no doubt also mechanical in character, has some scientific historical principles to support it. There are ten *Maṇḍalas* divided into several *Anuvākas*. The first *Maṇḍala* contains twenty four; the second four; the third and fourth five each; the fifth, sixth and seventh six each; the eighth ten; the ninth seven; and the tenth *Maṇḍala* contains twelve *Anuvākas*. Each *Anuvāka* consists of a number of *Sūktas*, and each *Sūkta* contains different number of *mantras*.

In order to understand the purpose of arrangement which underlies this division, it is necessary to remember that every *Sūkta* has a *Ṛṣi* (seer), *Devatā* (deity) and *Chandas* (metre), without whose knowledge the meaning of the hymn cannot properly be understood nor can the hymn be efficiently applied.<sup>1</sup> What *ṛṣi*, *devatā* and *chandas* mean is briefly stated by *Kātyāyana*:

यस्य वाक्यं स ऋषिः। या तेनोच्यते सा देवता। यदक्षर परिमाणं तच्छन्दः। अर्थेऽप्यस्य ऋषयो देवताश्छन्दोभिरूपादावन्।<sup>2</sup>

The *Ṛṣis* are the composers of the various hymns of the *Ṛgveda*. For every *sūkta*, the *Anukramaṇīs* give the name of its

1. अविदित्वा ऋषिं छन्दो दैवतं योगमेव च ।  
योऽद्याप्ये जपेद्वादि पापीयाज्जायते तु सः।। Q. *Vaidika Sāhitya Caritre* (Kan), p-73.
2. कात्यायन, *ऋग्वेद-सर्वानुक्रमणि*, Ed. U.C.Sharma, Vivek Publications, Aligarh, U.P. 1977, p-1

*Ṛsi* ; and there are about four hundred such *Ṛsis*. From the orthodox point of view, they are regarded as not composers or writers but as seers. Vedas are revealed scriptures, self-evident and self authoritative, not composed by human authors. The seers of the hymns are thus called “*mantra dr̥stārah*” (the seers of the *mantras*.)<sup>3</sup> They are not responsible for the contents of the *mantras*. they are only mediums communicating between gods and men. Yāska says,<sup>4</sup> that *Dharma* (duty) revealed itself to the seers who handed it down by oral instruction to that descendants, to whom *Dharma* did not itself manifest itself.

The *R̥gveda* consisting of three portions follows from the fact that the *Ṛsis* where divided broadly into three divisions :

1. *Śatārcinaḥ* - the *Ṛsis* of the first *maṇḍala* each of whom, seems to have contributed nearly hundred *mantras*.
2. *Madhyamāḥ* - the *Ṛsis* of two to seven *maṇḍalas*, and
3. *Kṣudrasūktāḥ* and *Mahāsūktāḥ* - the *Ṛsis* of shorter and longer hymn.<sup>5</sup>

In the *R̥gveda*, two to seven *maṇḍalas* are homogeneous in character as they present a collection of hymns belonging to a particular family. These *maṇḍalas* are known as *Kulamaṇḍalas*,

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3. अतीन्द्रियस्य वेदस्य परमेश्वरानुग्रहेण प्रथमतो दर्शनाद् ऋषित्वम्। Sāyaṇa, Commentary on *R̥gveda* I-1-1
  4. साक्षात्कृत धर्माण ऋषयो बभूवुः। तेऽवरेभ्योऽसाक्षात्कृत धर्मभ्य उपदेशेन मन्त्रान्संप्रादुः। उपदेशाय ग्लायन्तोऽवरे बिल्मग्रहणायेमं ग्रन्थं समाम्नासिषुर्वेदं च वेदाङ्गानि च ।। Yāska, *Nirukta*, I-20
  5. अथ ऋषयः। शतार्चिनो मध्यमा गृत्समदो विश्वामित्रो वामदेवोऽत्रिर्भरद्वाजा वसिष्ठः प्रगाथाः पावमान्याः क्षुद्रसूक्ता महासूक्ता इति।। Āśvalāyana Gr̥hyasūtra, III-3-3, Ed. K.P. Aithal, the Adyar Library, Madras, 1980.



to seven were taken out and collected together in one separate *maṇḍala*, and at the same time arranged with regard to the metre. The hymns 1 to 67 are *Gāyatrī*, 68 to 86 in *Jagatī*, 87 to 97 in *Triṣṭub* and the 98 to 144 in miscellaneous.

*Maṇḍalas* one and ten form the latest portions of the *Ṛgveda*. Of these, first *maṇḍala* contains 14 groups, each referred to one common seer and having hymns arranged according to the deities, on the same principles as in *maṇḍala* two to seven. For example, the first group of first *maṇḍala* consists of eleven hymns are related to Viśvāmitra Madhuchandas, of which, hymn first is addressed to Agni, second to Vāyu, third to Aśvins and Indra, and the rest to Indra.

The language and the contents of the hymns attributed to different seers in the tenth *maṇḍala* point out that it contains a good number of hymns of later origin.

The only principle which connects the different hymns of the *maṇḍala* is numerical.

In this tenth *maṇḍala*, a series of collections is arranged in the descending order of the number of hymns in each and extending from hymn 1 to 84. From hymn 85 to 191 single hymns are arranged in the descending order.

Further, hymns of the *Ṛgveda Samhitā* may be divided into two classes: religious and secular. The great majority of hymns are mainly the invocations to gods like Agni and Indra requesting them to accept the oblations, and favour the worshippers with generous gifts. The seers glorify the heroic deeds of the deities and munificence of their patrons. The Soma hymns describe the



crushing of the Soma-plant, the extraction of the Soma-juice, the preparation of Soma-drink by mixing ingredients like milk and honey and its exhilarating effects enabling the deities to perform their valiant deeds.

Among the secular hymns, there are famous *Akṣa-Sūkta* (X-34) recalling the ruin brought by dice; the *Bhikṣu-Sūkta* (X-117) glorifying the gift of food; the *Bhoja-Sūkta* (X-11) singing the glory of the prosperity of the donor etc. The hymns comprising dialogues between the River and Viśvāmitra (III-33), Sarama and Paṇis (X-108), Indra and Apāla(VIII-91), Yama and Yamī (X-10), Urvaśi and Purūravas (X-95) etc. are interesting even from a literary view-point. Hymns like Svāpanam (VIII-55) are supposed to be endowed with miraculous power. The *Sūrya Vivāha-Sūkta* throws light on the contemporary customs and the *Pitṛ-Sūkta* reveals the details of contemporary funeral rites. Hymns like the *Puruṣa-Sūkta* (X-90) and *Nāsadīya-Sūkta* (X-29) help us to trace the Vedic cosmological and philosophical ideas. The Panegyrics like I-126 are semi-historical as they give the genealogical details of the donors and the names of the Vedic tribes. A couple of hymns (I-164 and VII-29) consists of riddles, largely connected with gods. The *Jñāna-Sūkta* (IX-71) declares the supreme importance of knowledge. Besides the religious and mythological details, those hymns reveal various facts of the life of the Vedic people. Thus, the contents of the *Rgveda* are richly varied, revealing the contemporary life and thought which form the basis of evolution of Indian thought and culture through the ages.

#### **Vālakhilya Sūktas:**

A group of eleven hymns is known by the name of *Vālakhilya*, which stands by itself and which is generally put at

the end of the eighth *maṇḍala*. They are not recognized by older writers, nor commented on by Sāyaṇa, though mentioned in Kātyāyana's *Sarvānukramaṇī*. That these do not naturally belong to the place where they are found is quite clear. The earliest interpretations of the name *Vāḷakhilya* are found in *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*.<sup>6</sup>

स तपोऽतप्यत । स तपस्तत्त्वा शरीरमद्वुत । तस्य यन्मांसमासीत्ततोऽरुणाः केतवो वतरशना  
ऋषयः उदतिष्टन् । ये नखास्ते वैखानसाः ये बालास्ते बालखिल्याः ।

The fact that these *Vāḷakhilya* hymns disturb the regularity of both the *maṇḍala* and *Aṣṭaka* divisions shows that they were later additions.

#### **Apri̇ -Sūktas:**

The *Apri̇ Sūktas* are peculiar in character. They resemble the hymns which are found in the *Sāma* and the *Yajurveda*, being evidently meant for sacrificial purpose. These are ten in number, which are scattered here and there in the ten *maṇḍalas*.

Maṇḍala	Sūkta	Ṛṣi
1	13	Medhātithi (Kaṇva clan)
1	142	Dīrghatamas
1	188	Agastya
2	3	Gṛtsamada
3	4	Viśvāmitra
5	5	Vasuśruta
7	2	Vasiṣṭha
9	5	Asita or Devala
10	70	Sumitra
10	110	Rāma-Jamadagni

6. *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, I-23

The *Apri̇* hymns generally contain eleven *mantras* each, addressed to eleven separate deities in the following order; **First** *mantra* to Agni, **second** to Tanūnapat or Nāraśamśa (to other aspects of Agni), **third** to Iḷā a (gift), **fourth** to Barhiḥ (sacrificial pile of grass), **fifth** to Devī or Dvaraḥ, **sixth** to Uṣasanakau, **seventh** to Devyau Hotārau, (Agni and Āditya etc.), **eighth** to Sarasvatī, Iḷa and Bhāratī, **ninth** to Tvaṣṭaḥ (the creator), **tenth** to Vanaspati, (the tree of the sacrifice), **eleventh** to Svāhākṛti. The position of these artificial hymns necessarily presupposes a deliberate arrangement on the part of the collectors.

#### i. The Interpretation of the Ṛgveda

The 'word-interpretations' means to bring out clearly the intended meaning of the words employed by a speaker in particular context. Difficulty in understanding the meaning of the Ṛgvedic *mantras*, arises mainly from the fact that the Vedic text contain number of rare obsolete and obscure words which are not met in a later language. The language of the Vedas and specially that of the *Ṛgveda* is highly technical, polished and often figurative. In this connection, the following observation of M. Bloomfield is noteworthy ; "the entire Vedic tradition, the *Ṛgveda* not accepted, present rather the conclusion than the bringing of the long period of literary activity. Conventionality of subject matter, style, form (metre) etc. betray themselves at every step".<sup>7</sup> The seers have carefully and purposely selected each word of their hymns after a thorough consideration of the

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7. M. Bloomfield, *Sacred Book of the East*, Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi, 1884, Vol.42, p-xiii.

subtleties and shades of the meaning of appropriate words. The seers are very fond of employing figurative speech, and the use of metaphor is quite common in the Vedic language. This particularity of the Vedic style has been noticed in the *Brāhmaṇas* which observe that “the gods love recondite speech and abhor direct statements”.<sup>8</sup>

It is mainly due to the figurative use of the Vedic idioms that even, when there is no doubt about the literal meanings of the words employed in the Vedic *mantras*, their real importance remains vague. In this connection Max Muller has remarked : “the Vedic hymns on the contrary, even when we understand every word of them, remain very obscure in their structure or construction”.<sup>9</sup> It is obvious that if the Vedic *mantras* are literally translated in accordance with the usage of classical Sanskrit, it creates confusion, and results in sheer absurdity.

The problem of Vedic interpretation is not of recent origin. When Yāska composed his *Nirukta*, the problem of Vedic interpretation was as intricate as it is today. Even prior to Yāska, the meaning of numerous Vedic words and passages has become so much obscure that some persons began to doubt seriously whether the Vedic *mantras* convey any sense at all. Yāska in this connection refers to the view point of Kautsa who boldly declares that the Vedic *mantras* convey no sense.<sup>10</sup> Yāska

8. परोक्ष कामा हि देवाः। *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, VI-1-1-2

परोक्षप्रिया इव हि देवा भवन्ति प्रत्यक्षा दिशः। *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*, I-2-21

9. Max Muller, *The Vedas*, Calcutta, 1956, p-49

ज्ञातेष्वपि पदार्थेषु वाक्यार्थपरिकल्पनम्, अशक्यम् ऋक्सु भह्वीषु नैरैकतबुद्धिभिः।

c.f. *Rgvedānukramaṇī*, Ed. by C.Kunhan Raja, part-II, p-80

10. अनर्थका हि मन्त्राः। Yāska, *Nirukta*, I-15

first reproduces the arguments advanced by Kautsa, then refutes them one by one, and finally proves his own view point ridiculing Kautsa's gross ignorance about the Vedic lore.

Since very early times, scholars have sought to interpret the Vedas in different ways. No uninterrupted reliable tradition of Vedic interpretation was handed down along with the Vedic *mantras*. The inheritors of these texts began to advance their own conjectures with regard to an authentic tradition of Vedic interpretation. The tendency to make surmises and read pre-conceived notion into the Vedas, led to the emergence of different schools of Vedic interpretation. Already, at the time of Yāska at least the following five schools of Vedic interpretation, had come into existence, namely, those of the *Yājñikas*,<sup>11</sup> *Nairuktas*,<sup>12</sup> the *Aitihāsikas*,<sup>13</sup> the *Parivrājakas*,<sup>14</sup> and the *Naidānas*.<sup>15</sup>

### The Yājñika School

The Yājñika school of Vedic exegesis which puts ritualistic interpretations on the Vedas, is the most ancient and predominant among all the existing schools of Vedic interpretations. It has got a

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11. तत्रैतद् यज्ञिका वेदयन्ते। Yāska, *Nirukta*, V-11.  
अथान्यत्र यज्ञात्प्राजापत्या इति यज्ञिकाः। Ibid., VII-4.  
VII-23; XI-29,31; XIII-9, etc.
  12. वर्षकर्मैति नैरुक्ताः। Ibid., II-8.  
प्राश्नुत एनं वर्ण इति नैरुक्ताः। Ibid., I-14.  
I-12; II-16; III-8,4, etc.
  13. त्वाष्ट्रोऽसुर इत्यैतिहासिकाः। Ibid., I-16.  
राजानौ पुण्यकृतावित्यैतिहासिकाः। Ibid., XII-1.
  14. बहुप्रजाः कृच्छ्रमापद्यत इति परिव्राजकाः। Ibid., II-9.
  15. स्याल आसन्नः संयोगेनेति नैदानाः। Ibid., VI-9.  
ऋचा समं मेन इति नैदानाः। Ibid., VII-12. etc.

very long uninterrupted tradition. The earliest attempt to put ritualistic interpretations on the Vedic *mantras* is discernible in the compilation of the *Yajurveda* in which a considerable number of *mantras* from the *Rgveda* had been adapted for sacrificial purpose. In this connection, Shri Ram Gopal has concluded: "It is imperative to determine the propriety of ritual application of a Vedic *mantra* before passing a judgement on its ritualistic interpretations attempted by ancient Indian commentators. There is no doubt that the tradition of ritual application of Vedic *mantras* has proved both a boon and a bane of Vedic studies. On the one hand, it has contributed a good deal to the preservation of the Vedic texts. But on the other, it has, to a certain extent, proved a hindrance in the correct unbiased interpretation of the Vedas."<sup>16</sup>

### **The Nairukta School**

The first systematic attempt to interpret the Vedas was made by the *Nairuktas*, the proponents of the science of etymology. *Nairuktas* sought to interpret Vedic words on the basis of their derivative connection. It may be termed as *Nairukta* method of Vedic interpretation. The origin of this method may be traced to the *Brāhamaṇas*, which attempt the derivation of a number of Vedic words. The development of *Nairukta* method of Vedic interpretation is closely connected with the progress of grammatical and lexicographical studies in India. Therefore, Yāska in his *Nirukta* declares the science of etymology

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16. Ramgopal, *The History and Principles of the Vedic Interpretation*. Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1983, p.37

to be complementary to grammar.<sup>17</sup> Yāska's *Nirukta* is the last and best representative of the *Nirukta* school. Yāska refers by name, to about a dozen authorities on *Nirukta*, viz. Aupamanyava, Śākapūṇi, Gālava, Maudgalya, Agrāyaṇa, Kaṭṭhākya, Kraustuki, Aurnāvabha, Audumbarāyaṇa, Gārgya, and Śākaṭāyaṇa.

In fact, *Nirukta* is an independent and isolated branch of study but was only one of the several branches of the linguistic study of the Vedas. The *Padapāṭha* and the *Prātiśākhya*s were the other two important branches of the Vedic linguistic study which, being anterior to the *Nirukta*, are explicitly mentioned by Yāska in his work, and which undoubtedly contributed to the development of the science of etymology. The *Prātiśākhya*s are referred to by Yāska as *Paraśadani*,<sup>18</sup> while Śākalya, the author of *Padapāṭha* of the *R̥gveda* is mentioned by name and his analysis of the Vedic text is questioned in the *Nirukta*.<sup>19</sup>

Mainly, the Yāska's *Nirukta* is explained into two categories, namely, the *Nighaṇṭu* and the *Nirukta*. The term *Nighaṇṭu* signifies a collection of important Vedic words. The *Nighaṇṭu*, or *Samāmnāya* as it is called in the beginning of the *Nirukta*, is divided into five chapters and is therefore also called *Pañcādhyāyī*. The first three chapters containing Vedic

17. तदिदं विद्यास्थानं व्याकरणस्य कर्त्तर्यं स्वार्थसाधकं च । Yāska, *Nirukta*, I-15.

18. परः सन्निकर्षः संहिता । पदप्रकृतिः संहिता । पदप्रकृतीति सर्वचरणानां पार्षदानि ।  
Yāska, *Nirukta*, I-17.

19. वन इव । वायो वेः पुत्रः । चायन्निति वा । कामयमान इति वा । चेति च य इति च चकार शाकल्यः ।  
उदात्तं त्वेवमाख्यातमभविष्यम् । असुसमाप्तश्चार्थः । रथर्यतीति सिद्धस्तत्प्रेप्सुः । रथं कामयत इति वा । एष  
देवो रथर्यति । इत्यपि निगमो भवति । Ibid., VI-28.

synonyms, are regarded to constitute the *Nigāṇṭuka Kāṇḍa*, the fourth chapter which is styled as *Naigama Kāṇḍa* contains a list of such Vedic words whose meaning is not easy to understand and needs to be explained. The fifth chapter called *Daivata Kāṇḍa* is a glossary of the names of Vedic deities.

The word *Nirukta* literally means 'explanation' or etymological interpretation of word. So Yāska's work is entitled as *Nirukta* which is an explanation of the Vedic words listed in the *Nigāṇṭu*. Since it is the only work of its kind available at present, the title *Nirukta* now means the Vedic commentary composed by Yāska. The *Nirukta* which consists of twelve chapters and an appendix, is the earliest systematic commentary on selected words, the *mantras* and the deities of the *Ṛgveda*.

### The Aitihāsika School

The followers of the *Aitihāsika* school of Vedic *mantras* to be related to an *Itihāsa* i.e., a traditional account of ancient events, and interpret the concerned hymn or *mantras* accordingly. The earliest specimens of the *Aitihāsika* interpretation of Vedic *mantras* are seen in the *Brāhmaṇas*. Several legends concerning the legendary interpretation of Vedic *mantras* are found in the *Brāhmaṇa* portions of the *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda*, *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*, *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* and *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*. The Vedic and post-Vedic literature having nearly fifty legends, forms the basis of the *Aitihāsika* interpretation of certain hymns of the *Ṛgveda*. Among them, the legends relating to Indra-Vṛtra, Agastya-Lopāmudrā, Viśvāmitra-Śakti, Yama-Yamī, Saramā-



Paṇi, Ūrvaśi-Purūravas, Nahuṣa-Sarasvatī, Devāpi-Śantanu, Prajāpati- Duhitr, Sudās Paijvana, and Apālā are prominent and well known.

### The Parivrājaka School

The *Parivrājaka* school of Vedic interpretations referred to by Yāska,<sup>20</sup> which provides a mystic interpretation of the Vedas. According to this school of exegesis, not only those Vedic *mantras* which are considered to be of philosophical importance both by ancient and modern scholars,<sup>21</sup> but also the other Vedic *mantras* can be interpreted to conform to their mystic ideas.

The earliest specimens of *Parivrājaka* interpretation of the Vedas are seen in the *Brāhmaṇas* as well as in the *Āraṇyakas* and *Upaniṣads* too. The followers of *Parivrājaka* school of Vedic exegesis give the mystic interpretation of Vedic deities and sacrifices also. For instance, Mitra and Varuṇa are interpreted as *Prāṇa* (inhalation) and *Apāna* (exhalation) respectively in the prose portion of the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* and many *Brāhmaṇas*.<sup>22</sup> But such mystic explanations offered in the *Brāhmaṇas* suffer from inconsistency, as one and the same Vedic *mantra* has been variously interpreted. For instance, the god Indra has been interpreted in the *Brāhmaṇas* as *Vacas*<sup>23</sup> (speech), *Prāṇa*,<sup>24</sup>

20. बहुप्रजाः कृच्छमापद्यत इति परिव्राजकाः। Yāska, *Nirukta*, II-8.

21. *Rgveda*, X-72;82; 90 ;121;129, etc  
*Atharvaveda*, XIII and XV etc  
*Vājasaneyī Saṁhitā*, XXXI; XXXII-1-12; XXXIV-1-6, etc.

22. *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, V-3-4,2  
*Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*, III-3-6-9; *Pañcaviṁśa Brāhmaṇa*, VI-10-5; IX-8-16  
*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, VIII-4-2-6, etc.

23. वाग्वाऽनुष्टुप्वाग्निन्द्रोऽन्द्रो लोकम्पृणा न साधयन्त्यसन्नो। *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* VIII-7-2-6.  
सर्वं तस्मादाहुरिन्द्रो वागिति। Ibid, XI-1-6-18.

24. एषऽएवेन्द्रस्थानेष प्रणान्मध्यतऽइन्द्रियेणैन्द्र यदैन्द्र तस्मादिन्द्रोऽइन्द्रो हवै तमिन्द्रोऽइन्द्राच्चक्षते परोक्षं परोक्षकामा हि देवास्तऽइन्द्राः सप्त नाना पुरुषानसृजन्त। Ibid., VI-1-1-2  
XII-9-1-14; XIV-4-3-19, etc.

*Manah*<sup>25</sup> (mind), the Sun,<sup>26</sup> *Vāyu*<sup>27</sup> etc. Yāska refers to this tendency of *Brāhmana*s.<sup>28</sup>

### Naidāna School

Yāska refers to the view of the Naidānas with regard to the etymologies of the word *Śyāla* (VI-9), and *Sāman* (VII-12). In his commentary on the *Nirukta* VI-9, *Durgācārya* explains *Naidānaḥ* as *Nidānavidaḥ*, i.e., those who are expert in *Nidāna*. Elsewhere in his commentary *Durgācārya* employs the term *Nidāna* in the sense of primary cause of Vedic *mantras* to explain *Itihāsa* and thus makes *Nidāna* as the basis of *Itihāsa*.<sup>29</sup> But Yāska mentions that *Naidānaḥ* and *Aitihāsikaḥ* are separate and different in their approach. The *Naidāna* system of Vedic interpretation is known in name only, and any definite specimen of this system of interpretation is not found.

25 मनवेऽएवेन्द्रः। Ibid., XII-9-1-13.

26 शुक्रो य एष तपत्येष (सूर्य) ऽऽऽएवेन्द्रः पुरुषो। *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, IV-5-5-7.

27 यो वै वायुः स इन्द्रो य इन्द्रः स वायुः। Ibid., IV-1-3-19 ; XIV 2-2-6 etc

28 अथापि ब्रह्मणं भवति।

अग्निर्वा इतो वृष्टिं समीरयति धामच्छदिवा खलुवै भूत्वा वर्षति मरुतः सृष्टां वृष्टिं नयन्ति। यदा (खलुवै) आसवादित्योऽग्नि रश्मिभिः पर्यावर्ततेऽथ वर्षति इति।

यथो एतद्रोहात् प्रत्यवरोहश्चिकीर्षत इत्याम्नायवचनादेतद् भवति। यथो एतदश्वनारीयो द्वादश कपाले भवतीत्यनिर्वचनं कपालानि भवन्ति। अस्ति हि सौर्य एक कपालः पञ्चकपालश्च।

यथो एतद् ब्राह्मणं भवतीति बहुभक्तिवादीनि ब्राह्मणानि भवन्ति। प्रथिवी वैश्वानरः। संवत्सरो वैश्वानरः। ब्राह्मणो वैश्वानरः।। इति। Yāska, *Nirukta* VII-24.

29 Durgācārya explains *Itihāsa* as based on *Naidāna* (a story explaining the primary cause of composition of a Vedic hymn)

नैदानभूत इति हैवम् आसीदिति य उच्यते स इतिहासः। Durga on *Nirukta*, II-10

तत्र इमं निदानभूतम् इतिहासम् आचक्षते इति आचार्याः। Ibid., II-24

### Anukramaṇīs

In the field of Ṛgvedic studies a class of writing called *Anukramaṇīs* or Vedic indices, occupy a very prominent place. They provide lists of the hymns, their seers, metres and the deities in the order in which they appear in the *Ṛgveda Samhitā*. These *Anukramaṇīs* were prepared with a view to preserving the original text of the *Ṛgveda*.

Śaunaka and Kātyāyana are authors of separate works of *Anukramaṇīs*. Seven *Anukramaṇīs* are attributed to Śaunaka. The *Ārṣānukramaṇī* gives a list of the Ṛṣis of the *Ṛgveda*. The *Chandonukramaṇī* enumerates the metres in which the hymns of the *Ṛgveda* are. It also mentions the number in each *Maṇḍala* of *mantras* in each metres as well as the aggregate in all metres. The *Anuvākānukramaṇī* gives the initial words of each of the eighty-five *Anuvākas*, into which the *Ṛgveda Samhitā* is divided and the number of hymns contained in these *Anuvākas*. It also states that the *Ṛgveda* contains 1017 *sūktas*, 10,580 *Ṛks*, 153826 words and 432000 syllables. The *Pādānukramaṇī* gives an index of lines of the *Ṛgveda*. The *Sūktānukramaṇī*, which is not available, probably consisted only of the initial words (*Pratikas*) of the hymns. The *Devatānukramaṇī*, of which only ten quotations are preserved in Śadguruśisya's commentary on the *Sarvānukramaṇī*, probably consisted of an index of gods.

The *Sarvānukramaṇī* attributed to Kātyāyana, deals with all the data contained in the *Anukramaṇīs* within a compass of a single work. It gives the initial words of every hymn in the *Ṛgveda*, a number of its *mantras*, the seers, the deities, and the



metres even of single *mantra*. Another work, namely the *Ṛgvidhāna*, attributed to Śaunaka, deals with the magical effects, produced by the recitation of *sūktas*, or single *mantra* of the *Ṛgveda*.

## ii. Commentators on the *Ṛgveda* :

### Skandaswāmi :

The oldest commentary on the *Ṛgveda* is of Skandaswāmin. In the colophon at the end of *Ṛgvedabhāṣya* of each *Adhyāya*, he informs that his native place was Vallabhī and the son of Bhartrdhruva.<sup>30</sup> Most of scholars identify Vallabhī as a town in North Gujarat. Hariswāmi, in his commentary on *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* states that Skandaswāmi was a his teacher.<sup>31</sup> Most of the scholars opine that Hariswāmi's date to be 639 A.D. So, Skandaswāmi may be said to have lived in the beginning of the seventh century A.D.

According to Skandaswāmi, the knowledge of *Ṛṣi* and *Devatā* is very necessary for the understanding of *mantras*. He does not take the metre as necessary in understanding the meaning of a *mantra*. In the beginning of each hymn, he mentions the *Ṛṣi* and

30. वल्लभीविनिवास्येतामृगार्थागम संहितम् ।

भर्तृ ध्रुवसुतश्चक्रे स्कन्दस्वामी यथास्मृतिः ।।

Skandaswāmi, Colophon at the end of each *Adhyāya*

Ed. C.Kunhan Raja, University of Madras, 1935.

31. तन्नन्दनो हरिस्वामि प्रस्फुरद्वेदेदिमान् ।

त्रयीव्याख्यानधौरेयोऽधीततन्त्रो गुरोर्मुखात् ।।

यः साम्राट् कृतवान् सप्तसोमसंस्थास्थतथर्कश्रुतिम् ।

व्याख्यां कृत्वाद्यापयन्मा श्रीस्कन्दस्वाम्यस्ति मे गुरुः ।।

Hariswāmi, Q. *Treatment of Nature in the Ṛgveda*, Dr. Braj Bihari Chaubey, Vedic Sāhitya Sadan, Hoshiarpur. 1970, p-15.

*Devatā* thereof , and substantiates by quoting the statements. In his commentary, he has followed the *Yājñikas method* of interpretation. Hence his commentary may be called *Adhiyajñaparāka*. He has also followed the path of the *Nairuktas* in the interpretation of certain *mantras*. Hence his commentary at times, has become *Adhidaivataparāka*. Skandaswāmi has frequently quoted the passages from the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Āraṇyakas* in support of his interpretation. But unfortunately his commentary is not available in its entirety. Only some portions dealing with *Ṛgveda* I-1-1 to I-56-1; I-62-1 to I-121-15 and V-57-1 to VI-75-6 are available.

#### **Nārāyaṇa and Udgītha**

Nārāyaṇa and Udgītha were contemporaries of Skandaswāmi. Nārāyaṇa had commented on the sixth and seventh *Aṣṭaka*, while Udgītha on the remaining eighth *Aṣṭaka*. But Nārāyaṇa's commentary is not available. Only some portions of Udgītha's commentary on *Ṛgveda* X-5-4 to X-12-5, X-13-2 to X-52-3 and X-62-9 to X-83-6 are available. The available portions of the Udgītha's commentary are similar in the treatment of subject matter to that of Skandaswāmi.

#### **Mādhava Bhaṭṭa.**

The personality of Mādhava Bhaṭṭa is much controversial. Some identify him with Veṅkaṭa Mādhava, from the fact that Veṅkaṭa Mādhava mentions Mādhava Bhaṭṭa as a commentator and places him before Skandaswāmi; so it may be presumed that he preceded Skandaswāmi, though the latter has not mentioned the name of former. From the colophons of his

commentary, ग्रामे जातो गोमति व्याचकार।<sup>32</sup> it is evident that he was an inhabitant of the village Gomān on the south bank of the river Kāverī in Choḷa country in Dakṣinapatha. His commentary is very brief and therein passages from the *Nighaṇṭu*, the *Nitukta* and the *Brāhmaṇas* are quoted. His commentary is not available in its entirety. Only some portions of it have been published.

### **Veṅkaṭa Mādhava**

The first writer who has given a complete commentary on the *Ṛgveda*, is Veṅkaṭa Mādhava. He lived during tenth century A.D. In the colophons of his commentary, he has given enough information about himself. His father is Veṅkaṭārya and mother Sundarī. His grand-father is Mādhava. He belongs to the gotra *Kauśika*. He claims his commentary to be very brief and concise. In his commentary he has followed *Aṣṭaka* division. According to him, the meanings of the *mantras*, is not clear, and they can only be explained the *Brāhmaṇic* lore. He, who is well-versed in the *Nitukta* and *Vyākaraṇa*, knows only one-fourth of the *Ṛgveda*. Besides his commentary too, may be regarded as *Adhiyajñaparāka*.

### **Ānanda Tīrtha**

Ānanda Tīrtha alias Mādhvācārya, who flourished during 12th cent. A.D. and founder of the *Dvaita* school of *Vedānta*, has interpreted first forty hymns of the *Ṛgveda*. According to him, the main god whom the *mantras* vividly describe, is Nārāyaṇa. Thus his commentary may be called *Nārāyaṇaparāka* or *Bhagavatparāka*.

32. Mādhava Baṭṭa, *Ṛgvedavyākhyā*, Colophon at the end of the *Aṣṭaka* I, *Adhyāya* 2, ed. C . Kunhan Raja, Adyar Library, 1937.

### Ātmānanda

He has interpreted only one *sūkta*, viz., *Asyavāmiya Sūkta*. Due to his being a follower of Śaṅkara, his commentary is greatly influenced by *Advaita* philosophy. He claims his commentary be called *Ādhyatmaparāka*. His commentary refers to some commentators of the *R̥gveda*, whose commentaries are not available.

### Sāyaṇa

Sāyaṇācārya occupies a unique place in the history of Sanskrit literature. Sāyaṇa's works that have come down to us, are the most important repositories of Vedic lore. This great scholar of academic affairs was simultaneously a great man of letters, a very rare combination even among the ancients.

Sāyaṇa was born in a learned South Indian Brāhmaṇa family. His father was Māyaṇa and his mother Srīmatī. His 'Gōtra' was 'Bhāradvāja', *Sūtra Baudhāyana*. He belonged to the *Taittirīya Śākha* of the *Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda*.

Sāyaṇa had two brothers, Mādhavācārya and Bhoganātha. Mādhavācārya was the eldest one and Bhoganātha, the youngest.

Mādhavācārya says that his mother was Srīmatī, his father was the famous Māyaṇa and his two uterine brothers were Sāyaṇa and Bhoganātha (who appeared to be) his mind and intelligence.<sup>33</sup>

33. श्रीमती जननीयस्य सुकीर्तिर्मायणः पिता ।  
सायणो भोगनाथश्च मनोबुद्धि सहोदरौ ॥  
यस्य बोधायनं सूत्रं शाखा यस्य च याजुषी ।  
भारद्वाजं कुलं जन्म सर्वज्ञः स हि माधवः ॥

*Parāśarasamṛti Vyākhyā, Prasthāvana, VV-6-7*

Cp. Dr. K. Krishnamurthy, *Sāyaṇa's Subhāṣita-Sudhānidhi*, Karnatak University, Dharwad, 1968. Introduction p.2

Mādhavācāry is known as 'Vidyāraṇya' bearing the burden of sovereignty of Vijayanagara kingdom and as one of the greatest commentators also. When the Mādhavācārya was the minister of Harihara-I and Bukka-I to begin with, his younger brother Sāyaṇa held the high post of chief minister of Kampana who ruled over the Telagu region of the Nellore district. Sāyaṇa continued ruling Nellore as late as the year 1364-65 A.D.; for an inscription of his date at the city of Nellore still states that "Śrīman Māhāmaṇḍaleśvara Vīra Śrī Sāyaṇṇa odayalu was ruling the earth."<sup>34</sup> During the period of twelve years from 1364 to 1376 A.D. was the highest position of his political life. Sāyaṇa was the minister of four Vijayanagar kings namely Bukka-I, Kampana, Saṅgama II and Harihara-II. This is made evident in the colophons of his works. Thus in some of commentaries on the Vedas, he styles himself the minister of Bukka-I.<sup>35</sup> In his *Subhāṣita-Sudhānidhi* he calls himself the minister of Kamparāja.<sup>36</sup> In his

34. Translation from Telagu : Hail, on Friday the 5th of the dark fortnight of Mārgaśīra of the year Krodhi correspondint to the year 1286 of the illustrious Śaka era, while Śrīman Māhamaṇḍalesvara Vīra Śrī Sāyaṇṇa (it may be Sāyaṇa) odayalu was rulling the enrth, the people of all countries came to agreement in connection with the Friday market established by Kanchaṇṇagaru in Nellore.

Alan Buttern worth and V.Venugopal Chetty. *A collection of the inscriptions of copper plates and stones in the Nellore district*, part-II. Government press, Madras, 1905. P-847.

35. इत्थं श्रीबुक्कभूपालसाम्राज्यैकधुरन्धरः।  
विद्यातीर्थं गुरोर्दृष्ट्या प्राप्तसार्वज्ञ्यवैभवः॥  
श्रीमत्सायणमन्त्रीशः सकलागम तत्त्ववित्।  
दाशतय्यां माधवीयो वेदार्थस्य प्रकाशने॥ *Rgveda* with Sāyaṇa's commentary,  
Vaidika Saṁśodhana Maṇḍala, Poona, 1976, Vol.II, p.718

36. मतिमास्तस्य राज्ञो भूत् मन्त्री सायणसायणः।  
यन्मन्त्रेण न सर्पन्ति नित्यं शत्रुविलेषयाः॥

Dr. K. Krishnamurthy, Introduction to *Subhāṣita-Sudhānidhi*, p.4



*Dhātuvṛtti*<sup>37</sup> and *Alaṅkāra-Sudhānidhi*, he was the minister of Saṅgama II. In his commentaries on the *Śatapatha*, *Tattirīya Brāhmaṇas*<sup>38</sup> he calls himself the minister of Harihara-II.

Sāyaṇa's *Vedārtha Prakāśa*, a commentary on the *R̥gveda*, contains a very scholarly introduction. In this commentary, he has explained each and every word of text. He has pointed out all grammatical and accentual peculiarities, giving etymologies of difficult and new words. And at the same time he explains liturgical application of each and every *mantra*. At the beginning of each *sūkta*, before commencing to explain the actual text, he mentions the name of the sacrifice, or the offering at which the *sūkta* or its *mantras* are to be recited. He regards the knowledge of deity and metre as necessary appendage to the understanding of the true sense of the *mantras*. He frequently refers to the passages from the *Sarvānukramaṇi* and the *Bṛhaddevatā* in support of his view. Passages from the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Āraṇyakas* are also found quoted frequently. He explains the Vedic myths in the light of Purāṇic ideas by which he was very much influenced.

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37. तेन मायणपुत्रेण सायमेन मनीषिणा ।

आख्यय माधवीयेयं धातुवृत्तिर्विरच्यते ।।

इति पूर्वपश्चिम समुद्राधीश्वर कम्पराजसुत संगम महाराज-महामन्त्रिणा मायणसुतेन माधवसहोदरेण सायणाचार्येण विरचितायां माधवीयायां धातुवृत्तौ ।।

Beginning and Colophone of *Dhātuvṛtti*, Ed. A. Mahadeva Shastry and K. Rangacārya, Govt. of Oriental library, Series Bibliotheca Samskrita, No.23

38. इति श्रीमद्राजाधिराज परमेश्वर वैदिकमार्ग प्रवर्तक श्री वीर हरिहर भूपाल साम्राज्यधुरन्धर सायणाचार्यविरचिते माधवीये वेदार्थप्रकाशे कृष्णयजुर्वेदीय तैत्तिरीय ब्राह्मण भाष्ये तृतीयः काण्डः समाप्तः ।।

## 2. Geo-historical Elements in the R̥gveda

The *R̥gveda* is the earliest extant record of the Aryan activities ; it however helps us with rich information to read their early settlements in India and give us clue to their gradual expansion in different directions in India. The topographic map of R̥gvedic India displays conspicuously the primary features of river basins and the adjoining mountains. On the basis of the Vedic references, it may be concluded that mountains had much less influence as compared to those of the rivers which were intimately associated with the R̥gvedic Aryan activities and settlements.

### i. Rivers :

#### Topography of Sindhu River System

The *R̥gveda* is familiar with the whole of the Sindhu river system. Regional unity of the R̥gvedic India was a great contribution of the rivers, which provided easy accessibility and convenient land to live upon. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* refers to a set of seven rivers flowing westward.<sup>1</sup> Those seven rivers flowing to the west were the Sindhu system.

Sindhu<sup>2</sup> called Indus by virtue of its vastness, was the main river of the R̥gvedic India. Its basin was formed, as it is formed

1. अथ याः सप्त प्रतीच्यः स्रवन्ति । सोऽरण्येऽनूच्यः सः सप्त कपालो भवति सप्त हि याः प्रतीच्या स्रवन्ति सोऽस्यैषोऽवाङ् प्राणाऽएतस्य प्रजापतेः सोऽरण्येऽनूच्यो भवति । *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, IX-3-1-2
2. 'Sindhu in the *R̥gveda* and the *Atharvaveda* often means "Stream" merely (Cf. *Sapta-Sindhavaḥ*) but it has also the more exact sense of the "the stream" *par excellence*, 'the Indus'. The name is, however rarely mentioned after the period of the *Samhitās*, always then occurring in such a way as to suggest distance. The horses from the Indus (*Saindhava*) were famous'.  
Keith and Macdonell, *Vedic Index*, Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi, 1995, Vols. I&II, p.450

even now, by a number of rivers discharging into it from east and west. The *Nadīstuti Sūkta* in the *R̥gveda* says that :

“Accept this my praise, Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Sarasvatī, Śutudrī, Paruṣṇī, Marudvṛdhā with Asiknī and Vitastā ; listen, Ārjikiya with Suṣomā.

You, Sindhu, in order to reach swift-moving Gomatī, have united yourself first with the Tṛṣṭamā : now be united with the Susartu, the Rasā, the Śvetī, the Kubhā and the Mehatnu, in conjunction with which streams you advance.”<sup>3</sup>

#### **Sindhu :**

The river Sindhu is frequently mentioned in the *R̥gveda*. It is described as the mightiest river receiving huge volume of water from a number of tributaries. On the basis of its rapid and voluminous flow of water, the river has been mentioned as surpassing all moving bodies.<sup>4</sup> Its roaring sound went upto the heavens, it was unconquerable, crystal clear and resembled a youthful woman with a superb figure.<sup>5</sup> It was majestic and vast in expansion and used to run on a ‘path of gold.’<sup>6</sup> Tributaries

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3. इमं मे गङ्गे यमुने सरस्वति शुतुद्रि स्तोमं सचता परूष्ण्या ।  
असिक्निया मरुद्वधे वितस्तयार्जकीये शृणुह्या सुषोमया ॥ *R̥gveda*, X-75-5  
तृष्टामया प्रथमं यातवे सजूः सुसर्त्वा रसया श्वेत्या त्या ।  
त्वं सिन्धो कुभया गोमतीं क्रुमुं मेहन्त्वा सरथं याभिरीयसे ॥ *R̥v.* X-75-6
  4. प्र तेऽरदद्वरुणो यातवे पथः सिन्धो यद्वाजाँ अभ्यद्रवस्त्वम् ।  
भूम्या अधि प्रवता यासि सानुना यदेषामग्रं जगतामिरज्यसि ॥ *R̥v.* X-75-2
  5. दिवि स्वनो यतते भूम्योपर्यनन्तं शुष्ममुदियति भानुना ।  
अभ्रदिव प्र स्तनयन्ति वृष्टयः सिन्धुयदिति वृषभो न रोरुवत् ॥ *R̥v.* X-75-3  
अभि त्वा सिन्धो शुशुमिन्न मातरो वाश्रा अर्षन्ति पयसेव धेनवः । *R̥v.* X-75-4
  6. उतस्या श्वेतयावरी वह्मिष्ठा वां नदीनाम् ।  
सिन्धुर्हिरण्यवर्तनिः ॥ *R̥v.* VIII-26-18

rushed up very anxiously 'to meet the Sindhu'<sup>7</sup> due to considerable difference in level.

The Sindhu is the present Indus river. It is receiving the water from number of rivers. So, it is called sea (Sindhu). "It is important to note that the Sindhu assumed a different course from the present one in its lower valley. It has been changing its course gradually from east to west due to two physical causes : firstly, the rotation of the earth which causes the Indus like all other rivers flowing north-south in the northern hemisphere, to erode its right bank constantly; and secondly, the aggression of sand from the south and south-east has been forcing the river to migrate westward. A topographic study of the lower Indus region confirms the above fact. The present day surface of Sindhu (in Pakistan) is dissected by a number of channels which for the greater part of the year remain dry. Many of them have now been utilised as irrigation channels. It is proved that they were once occupied by the Indus and its deltaic distributaries."<sup>8</sup>

### **Sarasvatī :**

The main clue to the geography is provided by the river Sarasvatī. Sarasvatī is used in two forms. Firstly, as a river, in praise of which many sūktās are found in the *R̥gveda*. Secondly, as a great deity, whose name has been given to the goddess of learning. Sarasvatī has been described in detail in one exclusive

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7. राजेव युध्वा नयसि त्वमित्तिचौ यदासामग्रं पवतामिनक्षसि ।। *R̥v.* X-75-4

8. D.P. Saxena, *Regional Geography of Vedic India*, Grantham, Rambag, Kanpur-12, 1976, p-6

hymn in the *R̥gveda*.<sup>9</sup> It is described in superlatives. It is called 'Nadītamā', "the best of the rivers."<sup>10</sup> It was regarded as the seventh largest river of the *Sapta-Sindhu* region. It is described as "pure in her course from mountains to the ocean"<sup>11</sup> and having 'limitless unbroken flood,' 'swift moving rapid rush and coming with tempestuous roar'.<sup>12</sup> Sarasvatī springs from a "three-fold source" and the five tribes derive their prosperity from it.<sup>13</sup> Sarasvatī must be a long river, because the banks of which are said to be inhabited by many kings.<sup>14</sup> It also has a number of tributaries themselves "strongly flowing", with Sarasvatī as the seventh. It is 'Sindhumātā' (the mother of rivers).<sup>15</sup> The Sarasvatī with its tributary Dṛṣadvatī and Āpayā, are marked in the *R̥gveda*.<sup>16</sup> In addition, it is 'Saptasvasā', 'seven sistered'.<sup>17</sup> These must be the 'Sapta-Sindhavaḥ' that 'seek the seas'.<sup>18</sup>

Besides *R̥gveda*, the later Vedic texts contain descriptions that are inconsistent with the above. *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*

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9. *R̥gveda*, VI-61

10. अम्बितमे नदीतमे देवितमे सरस्वति । *R̥v.* II-41-16

11. एकाचेतसरस्वती नदीनां शचिर्यती गिरिभ्यः आ समुद्रात् । *R̥v.* VIII-95-2

12. यस्या अनन्तो अहुतस्त्वेषश्चरिष्णुरर्णवः ।

अमश्चरति रोरुवत् ॥ *R̥v.* VI-61-8

13. त्रिषधस्था सप्तधातुः पञ्च जाता वर्धयन्ती । *R̥v.* VI-61-12

14. चित्र इद्राजा राजका इदन्यके यके सरस्वतीमनु । *R̥v.* VIII-21-18

15. आ यत्साकं यशसो वावशानाः सरस्वती सप्तथी सिन्धुमाता । *R̥v.* VII-36-6

16. दुषद्वत्यां मानुषा आपयायां सरस्वत्यां रेवदने दिदीहि । *R̥v.* III-23-4

17. उत नः प्रिया प्रियासु सप्तस्वसा सुजुष्टा । *R̥v.* VI-61-10

18. समुद्रं न स्रवतः सप्त यद्हीः । *R̥v.* I-71-7

(25-10-1), *Jaiminiya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa* (IV-26-12) and the associated *Śrauta Sūtras* say that Sarasvatī disappears in the desert lands at a place called 'Vināśana'. So, this is called weakling river 'Vināśanā Sarasvatī'.<sup>19</sup> The *Manusmṛti* informs that the Sarasvatī had ceased to reach the sea by that time by disappearing at a place called 'Vināśana'.<sup>20</sup> A study of maps reveals the existence of a dry-bed (Ghaggar) of a mighty river which appears to be the Ṛgvedic Sarasvatī. The Sarasvatī of the Ṛgvedic times may be identified with the present Saruti or Sarasvatī which rises from the Siwalik hills in the Sirmur.<sup>21</sup> The Ṛgvedic Aryans develop their culture on the banks of the river Sarasvatī. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* reveals its sanctity and the importance narrating that the Aryan culture, i.e fire worship, spread to eastern India from the banks of the Sarasvatī.<sup>22</sup> Thus, the river Sarasvatī recalls the centre of Ṛgvedic Aryan culture.

**Drśadvatī :** Drśadvatī is frequently mentioned with the Sarasvatī.<sup>23</sup> It is shown that it flows in the nearness of the Sarasvatī into which discharged its water.<sup>24</sup> The Sarasvatī and

19. चतुश्चत्वारिंशदश्विनानि सरस्वत्या विनाशनात् प्लाक्षः प्रास्त्रवण स्तावद् इतः स्वर्गो लोकः सरस्वतीसम्मितेना ध्वनास्वर्गं लोकं यन्ति । *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*, 25-10-16

Ed. A. Chinnaśwami Śastry, Haridasa Sanskrit Series, Benaras, 1936

20. हिमवद्विन्ध्ययोर्मध्यं यत्प्राग्विनशनादपि ।

प्रत्यगेव प्रयागच्छ मध्यदेशः प्रकीर्तितः ।। *Manusmṛti*, Tr.- Chakrakodi Ishwar Śastry, Samaja Pustakalaya, Dharwad, 1969, p.30

21. D.P. Saxena, *Regional Geography of Vedic India*, p.8

22. तर्हि विदेशो माथव आस । सरस्वत्यां स तत एव प्राङ्दहन्न भियायेमां प्रथिवीं तं गोतमश्च राहुगणो विदेशश्च माथवः पश्चाद्दहन्तन्वीयतुः । स इमाः सर्वा नदीरति ददाह सदानीरेत्युत्तराद्गिरेर्निर्द्वावति तां हैव नातिददाह । तां ह स्म तां पुरा ब्रह्मणा न तरनत्यनतिदग्धाग्निना वैश्वानरेणेति ।।

*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, I-4-1-14

23. दुश्द्वत्यां मानुष आपयायां सरस्वत्यां रेवदग्ने दिदीहि । *Rgveda*, III-23-4

24. *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*, 25-10-13,14

Dṛśadvatī doab was a vast and sufficiently open land adjoining the Gaṅgā-Yamunā doab. The Dṛśadvatī appears to be the present stream which rises in the hills east of Bilaspur and continues to south-west through eastern Ambala, Karnal and southern Hissar districts passing by east of Thanesar and west of Jind. After crossing the Hissar district, it enters the northern part of Bikaner territory and passed by Bhadra and Nohar, beyond which it assumes north-western direction until it meets the Sarasvatī above Suratgarh.<sup>25</sup>

#### Āpayā :

The Āpayā<sup>26</sup> is mentioned between the Dṛśadvatī and the Sarasvatī. This river must have been the small tributary of the Sarasvatī.

#### Śutudrī :

Śutudrī is associated with the Vipāśā river.<sup>27</sup> In the post-Vedic period, the name of this river appears transformed to Śatadru 'flowing in a hundred channels'. 'Śutudrī is the present Sutlej which flows in Punjab. The Sutlej has changed its course very considerably within historical times.<sup>28</sup>

#### Vipāśā :

Vipāśā is freely mentioned twice in the *R̥gveda*.<sup>29</sup> Yāska tells in the *Nirukta*, that its earlier name was *Urunjira*. The word

25. D.P. Saxena, *Regional Geography of Vedic India*, p-10

26. दृशद्वत्यां मानुष आपयायां सरस्वत्यां रेवदग्ने दिदीहि । *R̥gveda*, III-23-4

27. प्र पर्वतानामुशति उपस्थद्वश्वे इव विषिते हासमाने ।

गावेव शुभ्रे मातरा रिहाणे विपाट्छुतुद्री पयसा जवेते ॥ *R̥v.* III-33-1

28. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.II, p-385

29. अच्छ सिन्धुं मातृतमामयासं विपाशमुर्वी सुभगामगन्म ।

वत्समिव मातरा संरिहाणे समानं योनिमनु संचरन्ती ॥ *R̥v.* III-33-3

एतदस्या अनः शये सुसंपिष्टं विपाश्या ।

ससार सीं परावतः ॥ *R̥v.* IV-30-11

'Vipāśā' means 'releaser of cords' (*vi*-without, *Pāśa*-cords).<sup>30</sup> A legend regarding this, is found in the *Mahābhārata*.<sup>31</sup>

### Paruśnī :

Paruśnī is mentioned in the *Nadīstuti*<sup>32</sup> and in the song of Sudās.<sup>33</sup> It was an important river of the Ṛgvedic times. King Sudās, the chief of the Tṛtsu tribe while marching on war against Kutsa, the king of Purus, could cross it only with the help of Indra who is said to have made it shallow by diverting its water into other channels. Purus failed to cross it and lost a large number of soldiers. A *mantra* in the eighth *maṇḍala* of the *Ṛgveda*, calls it a 'great stream' (महेनदी).<sup>34</sup> It is rolled down swiftly creating wool like waves vapour.<sup>35</sup> It is identified with the present Rāvi, which flows in the Punjab. During the Vedic times, this river probably discharged its water into the combined course of the Asiknī and Vitastā, a few miles below Multan.<sup>36</sup>

### Asiknī :

In order, this river is mentioned after Paruśnī in the *Nadīstuti* hymn.<sup>37</sup> According to Yāska, the meaning of the word Asiknī is

30. विपाशि विमुक्तपाशि । Yāska, *Nirukta*, XI-48.

31. उत्तार ततः पाशैर्विमुक्तः स महानृषिः ।

विपाशेति च नामस्या नद्याश्चक्रे महानृषिः ।। *Mahābhārata*, *Ādiparva*, 167-8, Pub. Svādyaṃya Maṇḍala, Paradi, 1968

32. *Rv.* X-75-5.

33. दुराद्योऽदितिं स्वेवयन्तोऽचेतसो वि जगृभ्रे परूष्णीम् ।

माहाविव्यक्पृथिवीं पत्यमानः पशुष्कविरशयच्चायमानः ।। *Rv.* VII-18-8

ईत्युरर्थं न न्यर्थं परूष्णीमाशुश्चनेदभिपित्वं जगाम ।

सुदास इन्द्रः सुतुकोऽमित्रानरन्धयन्मानुषे वद्विवाचः ।। *Rv.* VII-18-9

34. सत्यमित्वा महेनदी परूष्यव देदिशम् । *Rv.* VIII-74-15

35. श्रीये परूष्णीमुषमाण ऊर्णा यस्याः पार्वणि सख्याय विव्ये ।। *Rv.* IV-22-2

36. D.P. Saxena, *Regional Geography of Vedic India*, p-11

37. *Rv.* X-75-5



black.<sup>38</sup> This river is also mentioned along with Sindhu in a hymn of the eighth *maṇḍala* of the *R̥gveda*.<sup>39</sup> The Asiknī later came to be known as Candrabhāgā, and now this name of the river is known as Chanab flowing in Panjab.

#### **Marudvṛdhā :**

The river Marudvṛdhā is mentioned after Asiknī. Yāska suggests that it should be taken as an epithet of all the rivers because all swollen (*Vṛdhaḥ*) by rainy winds (Maruts).<sup>40</sup> Here, Marudvṛdhā is the proper name of a river like those of other rivers. It is a small Kashmiri stream flowing from north to south which joins the Chanab on its northern bank at Kistvar.

#### **Vitastā :**

Another river mentioned in the *Nadīstuti* hymn is the Vitastā (*R̥v.*X 75-5). It is the most westerly of the five rivers of the Punjab. The name was later corrupted to Bihat and its modern name outside Kashmir is Jhelam.

#### **Ārjīkīyā :**

This river referred to in the *Nadīstuti* hymn, has been identified by Yāska with the Vipās or Beas.<sup>41</sup> But P.L. Bhargava has identified it as the Hāro,<sup>42</sup> an eastern tributary of the Indus in the north-west of the Jhelam; and the mountain from which this

38. असीक्यशुक्लासिता । सितमिति वर्णनाम । तत्प्रतिषेधोऽसितम् । Yāska, *Nirukta*, IX-26.

39. यत्सिन्धौ यदसिक्यां यत्समुद्रेषु मरुतः सुबर्हिषः । *R̥v.* VIII-20-25

40. मरुद्वधाः सर्वा नद्यो मरुत एना वर्धयन्ति । Yāska, *Nirukta*, IX-26.

41. आर्जीकीयां विपाडित्याहुः । ऋजीकप्रभव वा । ऋजुगामिनी वा । Yāska, *Nirukta*, IX-26.

42. P.L. Bhargava, *India in the Vedic Age*. D.K. Printworld (p) Ltd., New Delhi, 2001, p-78.

river rises may be known as Ārjika, which is mentioned twice in the *Ṛgveda*.

#### **Suṣomā :**

Suṣomā is mentioned soon after the Ārjikiyā in the *Nadīstuti* hymn of the *Ṛgveda*. This is another river which is identified by Yāska with the Sindhu.<sup>43</sup> This river is referred to in another hymn also.<sup>44</sup> Suṣomā must be identified with the modern Sohān. It is an eastern tributary of the Indus flowing towards south of the Hāro.

#### **Trṣṭāmā :**

The *Nadīstuti* hymn mentions this river Trṣṭāmā. It is also western tributary of the Sindhu. The Ṛgvedic Trṣṭāmā was, therefore, in all probability identical with the Gilgit.

#### **Susartu and Rasā :**

These two rivers are mentioned just after the Trṣṭāmā, in a *mantra* of the *Nadīstutis*. The Rasā is mentioned in another *mantra*<sup>45</sup> also along with the western tributaries of the Sindhu. It may therefore, be identified with the river Pañjśir flowing to the South of the Hindukush range. The Susartu may be identical with the river Ghorband.

#### **Kubhā and Śvetī :**

The Kubhā is mentioned in the *Nadīstuti* hymn, and also mentioned in a hymn of the fifth *maṇḍala* of the *Ṛgveda*.<sup>46</sup> It is

43. सुषोम सिन्धुः। यदेनाभिस्रवन्ति नद्यः। Yāska, *Nirukta*, IX-26.

44. अयं ते शर्याणावति सुषोमयमधि प्रियः। *Rv.* VIII-64-11

45. मावो रसानितभा कुभा कुमुर्मा वः सिन्धुर्नि रीरमत्। *Rv.* V-53-9

46. Ibid.

identical with the modern Kābul river. The Śveti may be identified with Kunar, a tributary of the river Kābul.

#### **Krumu and Mehatnu :**

The Krumu is mentioned with the Kubhā, in the *R̥gveda*.<sup>47</sup> This is identical with the modern Kurum. The river Mehatnu is mentioned along with the Krumu in the *Nadīstuti*. Identification of this Mehatnu river with a river of modern age is difficult. Rather, it may be regarded as an independent tributary of Sindhu.

#### **Gomatī :**

This river is mentioned in the *Nadīstuti* hymn and in the eighth *maṇḍala* of the *R̥gveda*.<sup>48</sup> It is identical with the modern Gomāl. It is the last among the western tributaries of the Sindhu.

#### **Rākā and Bṛhaddivā :**

These two rivers are mentioned with the Sarasvatī in a hymn of the *R̥gveda*.<sup>49</sup> These must have been tributaries of the Sarasvatī. The Rākā was the probably the modern Rāksī and Bṛhaddivā may be regarded as flowing parallel to the Rākā.

#### **Suvāstu :**

The river Suvāstu is mentioned only once in the *R̥gveda*.<sup>50</sup> The word Suvāstu, signifying “fair dwellings”, indicates that there was an R̥gvedic Aryan settlement along its banks. It is identical

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47. *RV.* X-75-6; V-53-9

48. एषो अपश्चितो वलोगोमतीमव तिष्ठति । *RV.* VIII-24-30

49. सरस्वती बृहद्विवोत राका दशस्यन्तीर्वीरवस्यन्तु शुभ्राः । *RV.* V-42-12

50. उत मे प्रयियोर्वयियोः सुवास्त्वा अधि तुग्वनी । *RV.* VIII-19-37

with the modern Swāt, which flows to the east of Pañjkora and unites with the Kābul river.

#### **Anitabhā :**

In between the Rasā and the Kubhā, this river is mentioned only once in the *Ṛgveda*.<sup>51</sup> It is identified with the river Alingar, a tributary of the Kābul, or Kubhā.

#### **Gaurī :**

The river Gaurī is mentioned twice in the *Ṛgveda*. In one *mantra*<sup>52</sup> Gaurī is described in a picturesque way : as cutting its stream into several channels so as to appear desirous of having one, two, four, eight or nine feet and to be creating a thousand sounds in the atmosphere. The other *mantra*<sup>53</sup> describes Soma as growing in the valley of river Gaurī. The Gaurī river may be identified with modern Pañjakora which combines with Swāt, flowing to the east, then joins the Kābul river.

#### **Sarayū :**

Sarayū is mentioned three times in the *Ṛgveda*. It is described as a mighty river with *Sindhu* and *Sarasvatī*.<sup>54</sup> Sarayū appears in another *mantra* with Rasā, Anitabhā, Krumu and Kubhā.<sup>55</sup> Citraratha and Arṇa are defeated apparently by the

51. मावो रसानितभा कुभा कुमुर्मा वः सिन्धुर्नि रीरमत् । *Ṛv.* V-53-9

52. गौरिर्मिमाय सलिलानि तक्षत्योकपदी द्विपदी सा चतुष्पदी ।

अष्टापदी नवपदी वभूवुषी सहस्राक्षरा परमे व्योमन् ।। *Ṛv.* I-64-41

53. सोमो गौरी अधिश्रितः । *Ṛv.* IX-12-3

54. सरस्वती सरयुः सिन्धुरूर्मिभिर्महो महीरवसा यन्तु वक्षणीः । *Ṛv.* X-64-9

55. मावो रसानितभा कुभा कुमुर्मा वह सिन्धुर्नि रीरमत् ।

मा वः परिष्ठात्सरयुः पुरिशिण्यस्मे इत्सुम्नस्तु वः ।। *Ṛv.* V-53-9

Turvaśa and Yadus who crossed the Sarayū.<sup>56</sup> Sarayū is identified with modern Sarju of Uttara Pradesh. But Keith and Macdonell in the *Vedic Index*<sup>57</sup> record that Sarayū be identified with Krumu or with the united course of the Śutudri (Satiej) and Vipās (Beas), which are the east bank tributaries. *Rgveda* states “Let not the Rasā, the Anitabhā, the Kubhā, or the wide-roving ocean delay you: let not the watery Sarayū oppose you : may the happiness of your (approach) be ours..”<sup>58</sup>

**Topography of Gaṅgā River System :** This system implies in the statement of *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*. It says that “some rivers flow to the east from the white mountain”.<sup>59</sup> The rivers of this system are not many. They have been referred to separately.

The river Gaṅgā is mentioned only once in the *Rgveda*, i.e., in the *Nadīstuti*.<sup>60</sup> Later Vedic works supply some clues to this river. The banks of Gaṅgā were associated with the victories of the Bharatās.<sup>61</sup> It is mentioned with Yamunā.<sup>62</sup> The doab of these two rivers was inhabited by honorable people.<sup>63</sup>

**Yamunā :** Yamunā is mentioned thrice in the *Rgveda*. Its banks were rich in kine and steeds.<sup>64</sup> The Aryan king Sudās defeated

56. उत त्या सद्य आर्या सरयोरिन्द्र पारतः। अर्णाचित्ररथवधीः *Rv.* IV-30-18

57. Kieth and Macdonell, *Vedic Index*, Vol.II, p-344

58. मावो रसानितभा कुभा क्रुमुर्मा वह सिन्धुर्नि रीरमत्।

मा वः परिष्ठात्सरयुः पुरिणिण्यस्मे इत्सुम्नमस्तु वः॥ *Rv.* V-53-9

59. एतस्य वा अक्षरस्य प्रसासने गार्गी प्राच्योऽन्या नद्यः स्यदन्ते श्वेतेभ्यः पर्वतेभ्यः।

*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, III-8-9, Tr. Swami Mādhavānanda, Advait Āshrama, Culkatta, 1993.

60. *Rv.* X-75-5

61. एतद्विष्णोः क्रान्तं तेन हैतेन भरतो दौश्यन्तिरीजे तेनेष्टवेमां व्यष्टीं व्यानशे येय भरतानां तदेतद्गातयाऽभिगीतमष्टासप्ततीं भरतो दौश्यन्तिर्यमुना मनु गङ्गायां वृत्रघ्नेऽबद्धात्पञ्चाशतां हयानिति।  
*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, 13-5-4-11.

62. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VIII-23.

63. *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, II-20.

64. यमुनायामधि श्रुतमुद्राधो गव्यं मृजे नि राधो अश्व्यं मृजे ॥ *Rv.* V-52-17

the non-Aryan King Bheda on the bank of Yamunā.<sup>65</sup> Later, it has been respectfully associated with the Gaṅgā.

The other rivers mentioned in the *R̥gveda* are : the Siphā, the Añjasi, the Kuliśī,<sup>66</sup> the Vibhālī, the Vitasthānā,<sup>67</sup> the Yavyāvatī,<sup>68</sup> the Prayiyu, the Vayiyu,<sup>69</sup> the Śvetayāvarī,<sup>70</sup> the Amśumatī<sup>71</sup> and the Aśmāvatī.<sup>72</sup> These rivers are known just by the name, but cannot be identified with any certainty.

## ii. MOUNTAINS

The mountains had much less influence as compared to the rivers which were intimately associated with the *R̥gvedic* Aryan activities and the Aryan settlements. The Aryans being inhabited the mountainous region as also the plain region is clear from the references in the *R̥gveda*. The word *Parvata* or *Giri* is used in the sense of 'hill' or 'mountain'. The legend of the mountains having wings may be referred to the fast moving clouds.<sup>73</sup> It also indicates the terrestrial mountains.<sup>74</sup> The concept of the mountains as untouched by time,<sup>75</sup> points perhaps to the ignorance of the Aryans of the process of erosion by natural agents.

**Himavanta :** A common term 'Himavanta' or 'Himavat' is frequently used for a mountain. Himavanta in the Northern

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65. आवदिन्द्रं यमुना तृत्सवश्च प्रात्रं भेदं सर्वताता मुषायत् । *Rv.* VII-18-19  
 66. क्षीरेण स्नातः कुवयः योषे हते ते स्यातां प्रवणे शिफायः । *Rv.* I-104-3  
 अज्जसि कुलिशी वीरपत्ति पयो हिन्वाना अधभिर्भरन्ते । *Rv.* I-104-4  
 67. उत सिन्धुं विबाल्यं वितस्तानामधि क्षमि । *Rv.* IV-30-12  
 68. त्रिंशच्छतं वर्मिण इन्द्रसाकं यव्यावत्यां पुरुहूत श्रवस्य । *Rv.* VI-27-6  
 69. उत में प्रयीयोर्वयियोः सुवास्त्वा अधि तुग्वनि । *Rv.* VIII-19-37  
 70. उत स्या श्वेतयावरी वाहिष्टा वां नदीनाम् । *Rv.* VIII-26-18  
 71. अव दुप्सो अंशुमती मतिष्टदियानः कृष्णो दशभिः सहस्रैः । *Rv.* VIII-96-13  
 72. अश्मन्वती रीयते सं रभध्वमुत्तिष्ठत प्र तरता सखायः । *Rv.* X-53-8  
 73. आशर्म पर्वतानामोतापं वृणीमहे । द्यावाक्षामारे अस्मद्रपस्कृतम् ।। *Rv.* VIII-18-16  
 दिवस्पृथिव्योरव आ वृणीमहे मातृत्सिन्धून्यर्वताज्वर्यणाक्तः । *Rv.* X-35-2  
 74. शं न पर्वता ध्रुवयो भवन्तु ।। *Rv.* VII-35-8  
 अस्येदु भिया गिरयश्च दृळ्हा द्यावा च भूमा जनुषस्तुजेते । *Rv.* I-61-14.  
 75. अद्रयोऽश्रमण अश्रुथिता अमृत्यवः । *Rv.* X-94-11.

border region along the river Rasā, that flows to the ocean.<sup>76</sup> This mountain is called 'Mahāmeru'.<sup>77</sup> The term Himavanta shows that this mountain was always covered with snow. This is present Himalayas.

### Mūjavān :

The mountain Mūjavān is said to be the chief habitat of the Soma-plant.<sup>78</sup> Yāska said that it is the name of a mountain.<sup>79</sup> Vedic texts mention that it is the native region of the people called Mūjavants.<sup>80</sup> The Ṛgvedic people used to obtain the Soma-plant regularly from this mountain. Such references in the Vedic texts make us understand that the Mūjavān mountain lay to the north of the Ṛgvedic India. The mountain was intimately known to the Ṛgvedic people and its probable location is a part of the Karakoram range which hems the Indus basin in the North.<sup>81</sup>

Later Vedic texts mention the names of mountains like Manor-Avasarpaṇa, Trikakud Mainaka and Krauncha are laid to the Northern region. Vindhya, Paripatra mountain is said to form the southern boundary of Āryāvarta, which is called Aryan land. These are not mentioned in the *Ṛgveda Samhitā*.

76. यस्येमे हिमवन्तो महित्वा यस्य समुद्रा सहाहुः। *Rv.* X-21-4.

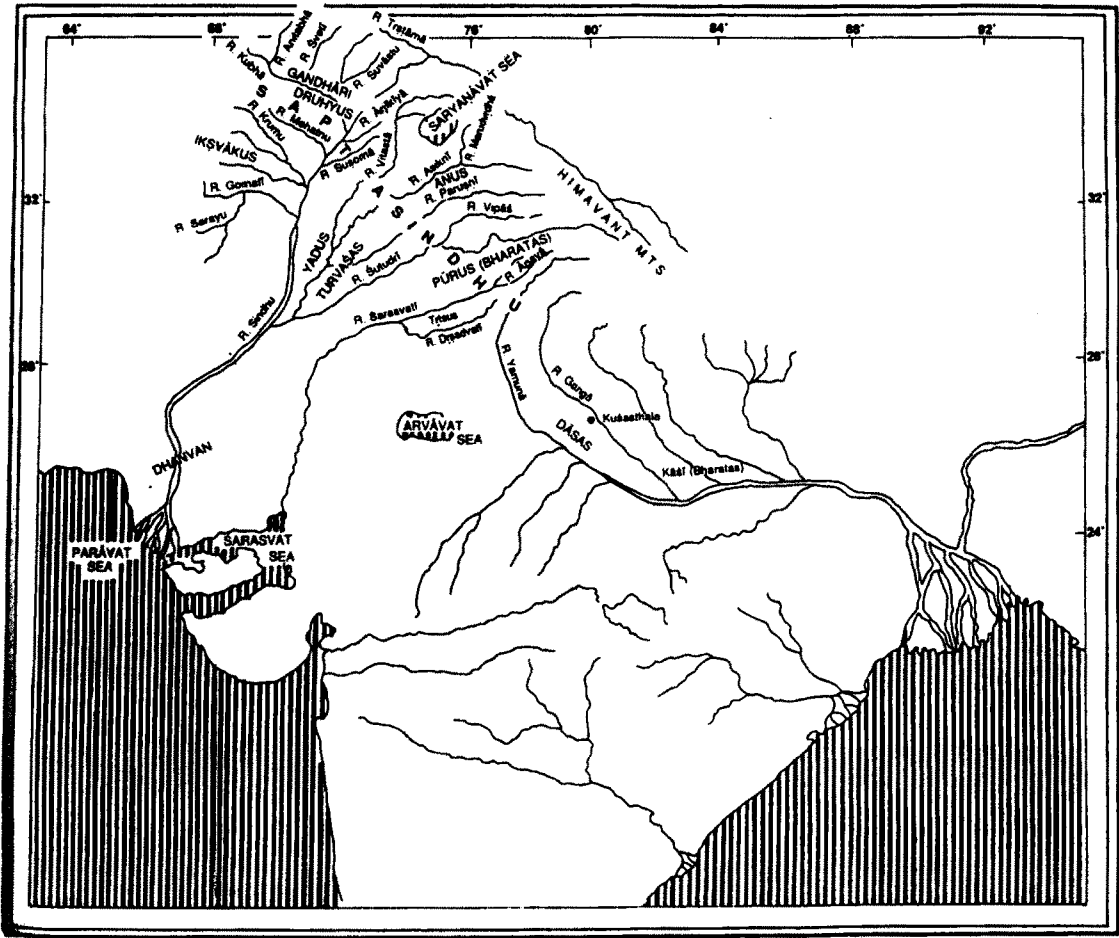
77. *Taittariya Āraṇyaka*, I-7-1-3.

78. सोमस्येव मौजवतस्य भक्षो विभीदको जागृविर्मह्यमछान् X-34-1.

79. मौजवतो मूजवति जातः । मूजवान्यर्वतो मुज्जवान् । मुज्जोविमुच्यत इषीकया ।  
Yāska, *Nirukta*, IX-8.

80. *Taittariya Samhitā* I-8-6-2; *Kāṭhaka Samhitā*, IX-7; *Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā*, I-10-4-20; *Vājasaneyi Samhitā* III-61; *Atharvaveda*. V-22-5, 7, 8, 14 etc.

81. D.P. Saxena : *Regional Geography of Vedic India*, p-2  
*Av.* XII-1-11; *Taittariya Samhitā*, V-5-11-1; *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VIII, 14, etc.



## Saptasindhu Region in the Rgvedic Period



### 3. Economic-Historical Elements of the R̥gveda

The *R̥gveda* reveals that the people of that age were not solely devoted to religious rites and philosophical speculations. The R̥gvedic people were pursued various occupations. Though economy was largely agricultural and pastoral, various industries were also resorted to.

#### i. Agriculture :

The main occupation of the people in the R̥gvedic age was agriculture. Regarding this, the *R̥gveda* clearly states : "Giving serious attention (to my advice), play not with dice ; pursue agriculture ; delight in wealth (so acquired) ; there, gambler, are cows ; there is a wife ; so has this (visible) sovereign Sāvitri declare to me."<sup>1</sup>

"The ploughshare furrowing the field provides food the ploughman ; a man travelling along a road acquires wealth for his master by his movements ; a Brahman expounding the Veda is better than one not expounding it ; so let the man who gives become a kinsman to the man who gives not".<sup>2</sup>

The word 'Kṛṣi' (agriculture) is a derivative of the root 'Kṛś' (to cultivate). The Aśvins are seen associated with ploughing in agriculture.<sup>3</sup> So also, Indra is associated with the ploughing. He

1. अक्षयैर्मा दीव्यः कृषिमित्कृषस्व वित्ते रमस्व बहु मन्यमानः।  
तत्र गावः कितव तत्र जाया तन्मे वि चष्टे सवितायमर्यः॥ R̥v. X-34-13.
2. कृषिन्नित्फाल आशितं कृणोति यन्नध्यानमप वृद्धूते चरित्रैः।  
वदन् ब्रह्मावदतो वनीयान् पृणन्नापिर पृणन्तमभिष्यात्॥ R̥v. X-117-7.
3. दशस्यन्त मनवे पूर्व्य दिवि यवं वृकेण कर्षथ।  
ता वामध्य सुमतिभिः शुभस्पती अश्विना प्र स्तुवीमहि॥ R̥v. VIII-22-6.  
यवं वृकेण अश्विना वपन्ता। R̥v. I-117-21

is called the '*Urvarāpati*'<sup>4</sup> the lord of the ploughed land. It is described that once *Vṛtra* withheld the timely rains and brought on distressing droughts that hampered the progress of agricultural work. In that crisis, *Indra* fought against the *Vṛtra*, killed him and let loose the rain by rending open his cloud-body.<sup>5</sup> *Indra* is addressed as '*Śunāsirau*' along with *Vāyu*.<sup>6</sup>

### The Agricultural Process :

The plough land was called *Urvarā* or *Kṣetra*. The lord of the field was called '*Kṣetrasya pati*.' The word '*Khanitra*' is used in the process of irrigation.<sup>7</sup> The plough - *lāṅgala*, is mentioned only once in the *R̥gveda* along with bullocks.<sup>8</sup> Its synonym - *Sīra* is also found in the agricultural hymn (IV-57). *Yava* (Barley) is found to be the principal crop known to the *R̥gvedic* people. The ripe grain was cut by *Dhātra* or *Śriṇi*.<sup>9</sup> The crop thus cut was being collected in bundles. This can be seen from the following *mantra* : "I take my sickle also in hand, *Indra*, with a prayer to you ; fill it, *Maghavan*, with a handful of barley already cut or piled".<sup>10</sup>

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4. आ याहीम इन्द्रवोऽश्वपते गोपत उर्वरापते ।  
सोमं सोमपदे पिब ॥ *Rv.* VIII-21-3.
  5. अहं भूमिमददामार्यायाहं वृष्टिं दाशुषे मर्त्याय ।  
अहमपो अनयं वावशाना मम देवासो अनु केतमायन् ॥ *Rv.* IV-26-2.
  6. शुनासिराविमां वाचं जुषेथां यद्विवि चक्रथुः पयः ।  
तेनेमामुप सिञ्चतम् ॥ *Rv.* IV-57-5.
  7. अगस्त्यः खनमानः खनित्रैः प्रजामपत्यं बलमिच्छमानः । *Rv.* I-179-6
  8. शुनं वाहाः शुनं नरः शुनं कृषतु लाङ्गलम् ।  
शुनं वरत्रा बद्यन्तां शुनमष्टमुदिङ्गय ॥ *Rv.* IV-57-4
  9. गिरा च श्रुष्टिः सभरा असन्नो नेदीय इत्सृण्यः पक्वमेयात् । *Rv.* X-101-3
  10. तवेदिन्द्राहमाशसा हस्ते दात्रं चना ददे ।  
दिनस्य वा मघवन्त्संभृतस्य वा पूर्यि यवस्य काशिना ॥ *Rv.* VIII-78-10  
X-131-2 etc

The bundles (*pārṣa*) are referred to as being beaten or trampled on the special place reserved for it which is called *Khala*.<sup>11</sup> The next operation was separation of grain from straw which was done with the winnowing fan.<sup>12</sup> For the measurement of the grain, a 'Urdara' (wooden vessel) was used.<sup>13</sup> After the cleaning process, the grain was stored in *Sthivis*.<sup>14</sup> There is a reference to sowing of seeds but transportation of saplings does not appear to be mentioned. The words '*Kṛṣṭi*'<sup>15</sup> and '*Carṣṇiḥ*'<sup>16</sup> originally meant as cultivation and cultivated land, respectively, came to mean people in general and inhabited land.

The prayers for successful cultivation and the possession of cattle-wealth reveal the importance attached to *Rgvedic* people. The agricultural hymn describes the importance of agriculture, the worship of Kṣetrapati, and prayer to Indra, abundance of crops and the fertility of the soil, and agricultural method are found in the *Rgveda*.<sup>17</sup>

“With the master of the field, our friend, we triumph ; may he bestow upon us cattle, horses, nourishment, for by such (gifts) he makes us happy.

11. खले न पर्षान् प्रतिहन्मि भूरि किं मा निन्दन्ति शत्रवोऽनिन्द्राः। *Rv.* X-48-7

12. वपन्तो बीजमिव धान्याकृतः। *Rv.* X-94-13

13. तमूर्दरं न प्रणता यवेनेन्द्रम्। *Rv.* II-14-11

14. यवमिव स्थिविभ्यः। *Rv.* X-68-3

15. यद्विन्द्र पृथिवी दशभुजिरहानि विश्वा ततनन्त कृष्टयः। *Rv.* I-52-11

I-100-10; 160-5; III-49-1; IV-21-2 etc.

16. अस्य श्रोषन्त्वा भुवो विश्वा यश्चर्षणीरभिः।

सूरं चित्ससुषीरिषः॥ *Rv.* I-86-5

III-43-2

17. *Rv.* IV-57.

क्षेत्रस्य पतिना वयं हितेनेव जयामसि। गामश्वं पोषयित्वा स नो मृळातीदृशे ॥1॥

क्षेत्रस्य पते मधुमन्तमूर्मि धेनुरिव पयो अस्मासु धुक्ष्व।

Lord of the field, bestow upon us sweet abundant, (water), as the milch cow (yields her) milk, dropping like honey, bland as butter ; may the lords of the water make us happy.

May the herbs (of the field) be sweet for us ; may the heavens, the waters, the firmament, be kind to us; may the lord of the field be gracious to us ; let us, undeterred (by foes), have recourse to him.

May the oxen (draw) happily, the men (labour) happily; the plough furrow happily, may the traces bind happily ; wield the goad happily.

Śuna and Sīra be pleased by this our praise, and consequently sprinkle this (earth) with the water which you have created in heaven.

Auspicious Sītā, be present, we glorify you ; that you may be propitious to us, that you may yield us abundant fruit.

May Indra take hold of Sītā ; may Puṣan guide her ; may she, well stored with water, yield it as milk, year after year.

May the ploughshares break up our land happily; may the plough-man go happily with the oxen ; may Parjanya (water the earth) with sweet showers happily ; grant Śuna and Sīra, prosperity to us".

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मधुश्रुतं घृतमिव सुपूतमृतस्य नः पतयो मूळयन्तु ।।2।।

मधुमतीरोषधीर्द्याव आपो मधुमन्त्रो भवत्वन्तरिक्षम् ।

क्षेत्रस्य पतिर्मधुमान्नो अस्त्वरिष्यन्तो अन्वेनं चरेम ।।3।।

शुनं वाहाः शुनं नरः शुनं कृषतु लाङ्गलम् । शुनं वरत्रा बध्न्तां शुनमष्टामुदिङ्गय ।।4।।

शुनासीराविमां वाचं जुषेथां यद्विवि चक्रथुः पयः । तेनेमामुप सिञ्चतम् ।।5 ।।

अर्वाचि सुभगे भव सीते वन्दामहे त्वा । यथा नः सुभगाससि यथा नः सुफलाससि ।।6।।

इन्द्रः सीतां नि गृह्णातु तां पूषानु यच्छतु । स नः पयस्वती दुहामुत्तरामुत्तरां समाम् ।।7।।

शुनं नः फाला वि कृषन्तु भूमिं शुनं कीनाशा अभि यन्तु वाहैः ।

शुनं पर्जन्यो मधुना पयोभिः शुनासीरा शुनमस्मासु धत्तम् ।।8।।

## ii. Cattle-breeding :

The *R̥gveda* classifies the animals in three types. Those that pertain to the wind, those to the forest and those to domestic environments.<sup>18</sup> The *R̥gveda* indicates that the *Vāyavyaḥ* beasts would be those which could fly, i.e the winged ones. Another distinction is between those beasts that could take by hands (*hastadāna*) and those that could do so only by the mouth (*mukhādāna*).<sup>19</sup> In the latter category, are included almost all beasts, while in the former such beasts as men and the monkey. The *R̥gveda* mentions frequently few animals, like ; *Siṃhah* (lion), *R̥ṣya* (wild deer), the *Gavya* (*Bos gavaes*), *Mahiṣa* (buffalo), *Mṛga* (the deer), *Śīsumara* (crocodile-like animal). etc.

Cattle-breeding forms an indispensable part of a farmer's life. The animal economy of the *R̥gvedic* people was not commercialised. Animals were kept for the supply of milk, butter, curd and ghee, it supplied the other needs of agriculture ; for, cattle were used for ploughing, carrying loads, and filling the carts. The *R̥gvedic* economy was primarily based on the cow, but other animals also contributed their share. Articles like sandals, straps and thongs, whips, bellows and bottles were manufactured from its hide. Besides, cow was also a medium of exchange, as various articles of daily need were bartered with cows. They were also given to priests as gifts. Oxen were the main draught animals being harnessed to carts and plough. Some times oxen were used for meat. In the *R̥gveda*, sage

18. पशून् ताँश्चक्रे वायव्यां आरण्यान् ग्राम्याश्चये । *R̥v.* X-90-8

19. S.A. Dange : *Cultural Sources from the Veda*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1977, p-12

Atithigva-host welcomed the guests by killing oxen and serving meat to them. Mahiṣa (buffaloes) supplied meat and milk and were used as drought animal. Aśvāḥ (horses) were also kept for riding, pulling chariots, battles and races and were given as gifts. The chief use of Uṣṭra or Uṣṭi (camel) was as a beast of burden. Hastinaḥ (elephants) breeding was also known to the Ṛgvedic people. Besides, cattle-breeding remained as a symbol of wealth and prosperity.

The main duty of the herdsmen was to take the cattle to pasture for grazing in the morning and bring them back home safely at evening. The pastures were wide and open where cattle used to roam and graze freely. They thrived during the winter season as the coming of early heat (summer) is said to be injurious to them. Drizzling rains by temperate cyclones during winters, gave them life, such rains appear to be associated with god Parjanya. The god Pūṣan regarded as the guardian of paths and expert in averting dangers in the way.

The *Ṛgveda* throws an abundant light on values of cows, the well-being of a herdsman and his safe return home with the cows and prayers to the gods protection of the cattles. The hymn X-19 describes as follows :<sup>20</sup>

“Come back ; go not elsewhere ; abounding in wealth, sprinkle us; Agni and Soma, you who cloth (your worshippers) again, bestow upon us riches.

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20. *Rv.* X - 19

नि वर्तध्वं मानु गातास्मान्तिषक्त रेवतीः।अग्निषोमा पुनर्वसू अस्मे धारयन्तं स्यीम्॥१॥  
पुनरेना नि वर्तय पुनरेना न्या कुरु। इन्द्र एणा नि यच्छत्वग्निरेना उपाजतु॥२॥

Bring them back again, render them obedient; may Indra restore them ; may Agni bring them night.

May they come back to me and be fostered under this (their) protector ; do, Agni, keep them here ; may whatever wealth (there is) remain here,

I invoke the knowledge of the place, of their going of their coming, of their departure, of their wandering, of their returning ; (I invoke) him who is their keeper.

May the keeper return (with them) ; he who reaches them when lost; who reaches them when straying; who reaches them when wandering, and returning.

Indra, come back and bring back (the cattle); give us our cows again, may we rejoice in our cows being alive.

I nourish you gods, who are ever where present, with curds, with butter, with milk; may all those deities who are entitled to worship, reward us with riches.

Come back (you cows), bring them back ; return (you cows), bring them back; and (you cows) coming back return; there are four quarters of the earth, bring them back from them".

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पुनरेता नि वर्तन्तामस्मिन् पुष्यन्तु गोपतौ । इहैवाग्ने नि धारयेह तिष्ठतु या रयिः ॥३॥  
यन्नियानं न्ययनं संज्ञानं यत्परायणम् । आवर्तनं निवर्तनं यो गोपा अपि तं हुवे ॥४॥  
य उदानङ् व्ययनं य उदानट् परायणम् । आवर्तनं निवर्तनमपि गोपा नि वर्तताम् ॥५॥  
आ नवर्त नि वर्तय पुनर्न इन्द्र गा देहि । जीवाभिर्भुवनाजामहै ॥६॥  
परि वो विश्वतो दध ऊर्जा घृतेन पयसा । ये देवाः के च यज्ञियास्ते रय्या सं सृजन्तु नः ॥७॥  
आ निवर्तन वर्तय नि निवर्तन वर्तय । भूम्याश्चतस्रः प्रदिशस्ताभ्य एना नि वर्तय ॥८॥



### iii. Industrial Occupations :

The Ṛgvedic people practised simple arts of a civilized life among all the artisans. The wood work and metal work were the most important for the Ṛgvedic society. They prepared articles of common use, particularly those productions required in ritual performances, in the war and in agricultural implements. The artisans were themselves engaged in the food and clothing industries to prepare very simple articles. A large number of poor labours earned their livelihood by working from the lower crafts. In the Ṛgvedic period, industry does not appear to be servile in nature. Some of them, were appointed by the king,<sup>21</sup> who were called Rathakāra and Takṣan for preparing the articles required to king. Various industries were run by the Ṛgvedic people, of which the most important and most worth are mentioned below :

#### Carpentry

In the Ṛgvedic period 'Takṣan' was referred to a carpenter class. The Sanskrit term 'Takṣan' and Zend 'Tahan' and the Greek 'Tekan' all mean a carpenter. These terms indicate the existence and development of carpenter's art among the Indo-Europeans.<sup>22</sup> Takṣan was specialised in the art of manufacturing chariots.<sup>23</sup> The Takṣan was also employed in making wooden vessels (*droṇa*) for household purpose<sup>24</sup> and among the ritual

21. Keith and Macdonell, *Vedic Index*, Vol. I, p.96

22. Purushottam Chandra Jain : *Labour in Ancient India*, Sterling Publishers (p) Ltd. New Delhi-16, 1971,p-81

23. रथं न तष्ट्रेव तत्सिनाय । Ṛṇ I-61-4

24. दुणा सदस्थमश्रुषे । Ṛṇ IX-65-6



accessories, Soma vessel (*camasa* or *dru* or *droṇa*).<sup>25</sup> Buckets (*āhāva*),<sup>26</sup> drinking and cooking vessels (*pātra*)<sup>27</sup> ladle (*mekṣṇa*)<sup>28</sup> and carts (*anas*)<sup>29</sup> were made of wood. The *R̥gveda* mentions ships with hundred oars (*aritrām*),<sup>30</sup> and furnished with wings or sails (*patātri*).<sup>31</sup> Takṣan used to manufacture *Talpa* (cot)<sup>32</sup> *Proṣṭha* (a broad wooden bench, on which women sleep),<sup>33</sup> and *Vahya* (more compartable wooden beds). Moreover *Śaṅku* (wooden pegs),<sup>34</sup> *Kuliṣa* (axe)<sup>35</sup> were also manufactured.

### Specialization in Carpentry :

The *R̥gvedic* references reveal that the Vedic carpenter had attained a high degree of competence in his trade. The fashioning of the wheels, the fitting on of tyres, the constuction of chariots of special shape and design like those with three wheels with ornamental pillars and decorated awning, strong frames and axels are vividly referred to in the *R̥gveda*. The carpenter was

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25. न निन्दिम चमसं यो महाकुलोऽग्ने भ्रातारुण इद्धतिमूदिम् । *R̥v.* I-161-1
  26. पूर्ण आहवो मदिरस्य मध्वो यं विश्व इदभिर्हर्यन्ति देवाः । *R̥v.* X-112-6  
I-134-8; X-101-6 etc
  27. तुरीयं पात्रममृक्तममर्त्यं द्रविणोदाः पिबतु द्रविणोदसः । *R̥v.* II-37-4  
I-34-8 ; 175-3 etc.
  28. उप त्वा जुहो३ मम घृताचीर्यन्तु हर्यत । अग्ने हव्या जुषस्वनः ।। *R̥v.* VIII-44-5  
I-20-6; X-21-3 etc.
  29. अपोषा अनसः सरत्संपिष्टादह भिभ्युषी । *R̥v.* IV-30-10  
X-85-10; 86-18
  30. शतं अरित्रां नावं अतस्थिवासम् । *R̥v.* I-116-5
  31. पतत्रीभिर्नासत्या सातये कृतं । *R̥v.* X-143-5
  32. तल्याऽशीवरीः स्त्रियः । *R̥v.* VII-55-8
  33. प्रोष्ठे शया वह्नेशया नारीः । *R̥v.* VIII-55-8
  34. शङ्खवोऽर्पिताः षष्ठिर्न चलाचलासः । *R̥v.* I-164-48
  35. रथं न कुलिशः समृण्वती । *R̥v.* III-2-1

expected to take great care to join very strong axle, because on it that the safety of the chariots and the inmates rested. The immortals, spoken of as depending upon Sāvitṛ are compared to a chariot resting upon the pin of the axle.<sup>36</sup>

It is further stated that an axle of heavy weight is never heated up.<sup>37</sup> At another place, it is said that not only the axle but also the other parts of the chariot, should be strong to bear the heavy weight. Thus says the sage :

“May the horses be steady, the axle be strong, the pole be not defective ; the yoke not be rotten ; may Indra preserve the two yoke-pins from decay, car with the uninjured felines, be ready for us.

Fix firmly the substance of the *khayar* (axle), give solidity to the *Shishu* (floor) of car ; strong axle, strongly fixed by us, be strong ; cast us not from out of our conveyance.

May this lord of the forest never desert us nor do us harm; may we travel prosperously home until the stopping (of the car), until the unharnessing of the steeds.”<sup>38</sup>

The following hymns reflect a scene of the battle-field where the chariot plays an important role :

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36. आणिं न रथ्यमणृतं अधितस्थुः। Rv. I-35-6

37. तस्य न अक्षः तप्यते भूरिभारः । Rv. I-164-13

38. Rv. III-53

स्थिरौ गावौ भवतां वीळुरक्षो मेषा वि वर्हि मा युगं वि शार ।

इन्द्रः पातल्ये ददतां शिरीतोररिष्टनेमे अभि नः सचस्व ॥17॥

अभि व्ययस्व खदिरस्य सारमोजो धही स्पन्दने शिंशपायाम् ।

अक्ष वीळो वीळत वीळ्यस्व मा यामादस्मादव जीहिपो नः ॥19॥

अयमस्मान्वनस्पतिर्मा च हा मा च रीरिषत् ।

स्वस्त्या गृहेभ्यः आवसा आ विमोचनात् ॥20॥

“O Aṅgiras, with the deities associated in the invocation, draw this offering near you as the *Ṛbhus* (bend) the circumference of a wheel.

Virūpa, with constant voice, address you praise to this well-pleased shower of blessings.

What strong enemy shall we overthrow, to win cows by the help of the host of this Agni of unmeasured radiance ?

May he not (forsake) us, the liege men of the gods, as the milk-streaming cows (forsake not) ; the cows abandon not a little calf.”<sup>39</sup>

#### Pottery :

The potter (*Kulāla*) was mentioned first time in the *Yajurveda*.<sup>40</sup> Another word ‘*Mṛtpaca*’ is also used in *Maitrāyaṇī Upaniṣad*.<sup>41</sup> The *Kulāla* was to supply various utensils for the domestic and ritual use. The *Ṛgveda* mentions cooking pot (*Ūkhā*),<sup>42</sup> and water pot (*Kumbha*),<sup>43</sup> but there is no mention of a specific name for *Kulāla*. Following *Ṛgvedic mantras* describe :

39. *Rv* VI-75.

बह्वीनां पिता बहुरस्य पुत्रश्चिश्वा कृणोति समनावगत्य ।  
इषुधिः सङ्काः पृतनाश्च सर्वाः पृष्टे निनद्धो जयति प्रसूतः ॥ 5 ॥  
रथे तिष्ठन्नयति वाजिनः पुरो यत्रयत्र कामयते सुषारथिः ।  
अभीशूनां महिमानं पनायत मनः पश्चादनु यच्चन्ति रश्मयः ॥ 6 ॥  
तीत्रान्घोषान्कृण्वते वृषपाणयोऽश्वा रथेभिः सह वाजयन्तः ।  
अवक्रामन्तः प्रपदैरमित्रान् क्षिणन्ति शत्रूँरनपव्ययन्तः ॥ 7 ॥  
रथवाहनं हविरस्य नाम यत्रायुधं निहितमस्य वर्म ।  
तत्र रथमुप शमं सदेम विश्वाहा वयं सुमनस्यमानाः ॥ 8 ॥

40. *Yajurveda*, III-2-1

41. मृत्पचेनेदं शरीरं प्रतिष्ठापितम् । *Maitrāyaṇī Upaniṣad*, II-6;

42. *Rv*. I-162-13, 15; III-53-22

43. *Rv*. I-116-7 ; 117-6 etc

“You filled from the hoof of your vigorous steed, as if from a cask, a hundred jars of wine.”<sup>44</sup>

“When you filled for the (expectant) man a hundred vessels of sweet (liquors) from the hoof of your fleet horse.”<sup>45</sup>

“You raised up (*Rebha*), Aśvins, on the tenth day, like a hurried vessel full of gold ?”<sup>46</sup>

“Your poison as maidens, with pitchers, carry away water.”<sup>47</sup>

“The vessel is filled for him (with Soma) ; welcome Indra ; I pour it out for you to drink, as a water-carrier (pours water) from his bag”<sup>48</sup>

“Śakra advances, crushing the present Rākṣasas, as a hatchet cuts down (the trees of) a forest, as (a mallet smashes) the earthen vessels”<sup>49</sup>

“he shattered the cloud like a new pitcher ; with his allies (the Maruts) he recovered the cattle”<sup>50</sup>

### Textiles :

The *R̥gveda* contains more references to weavers and weaving. The traditions established by the R̥gvedic people continued for a long time to come. The *Vāya* and *Vāyyā* <sup>51</sup>- two

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44. शतं कुम्भान् असिचतं सुरायाः। *R̥v.* I-116-7

45. शतं कुम्भान् असिचताम् मधूनाम्। *R̥v.* I-117-6

46. हिरण्यस्य इव कलशम्। *R̥v.* I-117-12

47. उदकं कुम्भिनीरिव। *R̥v.* I-191-14

48. आपूर्णाः अस्य कलशः। *R̥v.* III-32-15

49. पात्रेवभिन्दन्त्सत एति रक्षसः। *R̥v.* VII-104-21

50. बिभेद गिरिं नवं मित्रं न कुम्भं। *R̥v.* X-89-7

51. पुनः समव्यद्विततं वयन्ती। *R̥v.* II-38-4

उषानक्ता वय्येव रण्विते। *R̥v.* II-3-6

words indicate the weavers. In the latter reference, the female weaver is indicated by the word *vāyyā*. In the *R̥gveda*, several words indicate that the textile industry. The words *Tantum*, *otum* and *Vayanti*<sup>52</sup> used for warp, woof and web. *Tasara* used for a weaver's shuttle.<sup>53</sup> *Mayūkhas*<sup>54</sup> referring to wooden-pegs are used for stretching the web (*tantra*).<sup>55</sup>

In the *R̥gvedic* period, wool was the chief raw material of the textile industry. Cotton and other fibre crops were not grown during that time. The **Sapta-Sindhu** region is famous for wool. The river *Paruṣṇī* is said to be '*Ūrṇā*'<sup>56</sup> and *Sarasvatī* is also called '*Ūrṇāvati*.'<sup>57</sup> But, the best wool came from the *Gandhāris*.<sup>58</sup> The wool-industry was well developed in the *R̥gvedic* period. The textile production of *vastra* is mentioned at various places in the *R̥gveda*.<sup>59</sup> Dr.S.A.Dange explains three types of garments : *Nīvi* (the under garment), the *Atk* (the fitting wear), *Adhivāsas*, which was the upper garment like the general coverings, *Drāpi* (a general tough covering like the armour) and *Śāmulyā* in an address to the bride.<sup>60</sup> In the *R̥gvedic* period, wearing was probably entrusted to women. Such *R̥gvedic* references describe elements regarding textile industry as below:

52. न अहं तंतुं न विजानामि ओतुं न वयन्ति । *R̥v.* I-75-5, 6;7-8

53. सामानि चक्षुः तसराणि ओतवे । *R̥v.* X-130-2

54. इमे मयूखा उप सोदुरु सद्ः । *R̥v.* X-130-2

55. त एते वाचमभिपद्य पापया सिरीस्तन्त्रं तन्वते अप्रजज्ञयः । *R̥v.* X-71-9

56. श्रिये परुष्णीमुषामाण ऊर्णा यस्याः पर्वाणि सख्याय विव्ये । *R̥v.* IV-22-2

57. उर्णावती युवतिः सीलमावत्युताधि वस्ते सुभगा मधुवृधम् । *R̥v.* X-75-8

58. सर्वाहमस्मि रेमशा गन्धारीणामिवाक्कि । *R̥v.* I-126-7

59. भद्रा वस्त्राण्यर्जुना वसाना सेयमस्मे सनजा पित्र्या धीः ।। *R̥v.* III-39-2

60. S.A. Dange : *Cultural Sources from the Veda*, p-43

"Two famous female weavers are said to extend, thread to complete the web of the sacrifice."<sup>61</sup>

"she, (wight) enwraps the extended (world) like (a woman) weaving a garment."<sup>62</sup>

"for a son, the (divine) mothers weave garments (of light)."<sup>63</sup>

"The seven milch cows approach the green-tinted soma which flows purified in a stream through the woollen fleece."<sup>64</sup>

"The sounding (soma) passes through the woollen fleece."<sup>65</sup>

### The Leather Industry:

The leather working was one of the occupations in the R̥gvedic time. The *R̥gveda* mentions *Carmamnā* <sup>66</sup> (tanner) and tanned leather.<sup>67</sup> The word *Carman* means hide and *Carmaṇya* indicates leather-work.<sup>68</sup> The word 'Go' is also sometimes used as a synonym of *Carman*.<sup>69</sup> The *R̥gveda* mentions various leather articles manufactured by Carmamna, e.g bow-strings,<sup>70</sup> a

61. उषसा नक्त वय्या इव रण्विते ततं तत संवयन्ती । *R̥v.* II-3-6

62. वस्त्रा पुत्राय मातरो वयन्ती । *R̥v.* V-47-6

63. पुनः सं अव्यत विततं वयन्ति । *R̥v.* II-38-4,

64. अव्ये पुनानं परि वार ऊर्मिणा हरि नवन्ते अभि सप्त धेनवः ।

अपामुपस्ते अध्यायवः कविमृतस्य योना महिषा अहेषत ॥ *R̥v.* IX-86-25

प्र रेभ एत्यति वरमैव्ययं वृषा वनेश्वव चक्रददरिः ।

सं धीतयो वावशान अनूषत शिशुं रिहन्ति मतयः पनिप्रतम् ॥ *R̥v.* IX-86-31

55. यो यज्ञो विश्वतस्तन्नुभिस्तत एकशतं देव कर्मेभिरायतः ।

इमे वयन्ति पितरो य आययुः प्र वयाप वयेत्यासते तते ॥ *R̥v.* X-130-1

66. अधस्पदा इच्चैद्यस्य कृष्टयच्छर्मन्मा अभितो जनाः ॥ *R̥v.* VIII-5-38

67. शतं वेणूञ्छतं शुनः शतं चर्माणि म्लातानि । *R̥v.* VIII-55-3

68. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, V-32

69. ते सोमादो हरी इन्द्रस्य निसर्तेऽशुंदुहन्तो अध्यासते गवि ॥ *R̥v.* X-94-9

70. गोभिः सन्नद्धा पतति प्रसूता । *R̥v.* VI-75-11

slings,<sup>71</sup> thongs to fasten the parts of the chariots,<sup>72</sup> reins for horses,<sup>73</sup> the lash of a whip,<sup>74</sup> etc. In the R̥gvedic period, hide-vessels were used for storing soma-juice,<sup>75</sup> honey,<sup>76</sup> curd<sup>77</sup> and wine.<sup>78</sup> Soma-juice is described as being kept in leather bottles.<sup>79</sup> The *Varatrās*<sup>80</sup> and the *hastagna* hand-guard<sup>81</sup> of the soldiers was made of leather. The leather armour was of dark colour and is compared with cloud.<sup>82</sup> The Carmamna supplied leather for the construction of war drums.<sup>83</sup> Leather articles, in same *sūkta* are mentioned.<sup>84</sup>

### The Metal Industry:

The metal industry also developed in the R̥gvedic period. Metal articles were made for domestic and ritual uses. The *Karmāra*<sup>85</sup> was considered as one of the most skilful workers in

71. अश्मानमुपनीत मृध्वा । R̥v. I-121-9

72. गोभिः सन्नद्धो असि बिळयस्व । R̥v. VI-47-26

73. गृभीता बाह्वोर्गवि । R̥v. VI-46-14

74. गो ओपशाधृणे पशुसाधनी R̥v. VI-53-9

75. प्रसुवान इन्दुरक्षाः पवित्रमत्यव्यम् । R̥v. IX-66-28

एषसोमो अधि त्वचिगवां क्रीळत्यद्रिभिः । R̥v. IX-66-29

76. यो हवां मधुनः द्रुतिः आहितः रथ चर्षणे । ततः पिबतं अश्विना । R̥v. VIII-5-19

77. द्रुतेरिव तेऽवृकमस्तु सख्यम् ।

अच्छिद्रस्य दधन्वतः सुपूर्णस्य दधन्वतः । R̥v. VI-48-18

78. सूर्ये विषमासजामि द्रुतिं सुरावतो गृहे । R̥v. I-191-10

79. चैदस्य कृष्टयः चर्मन्मा अभितो जनाः । R̥v. VIII-5-38

80. निराह्वावान् कृणोतन सं वरत्रा दधातन । R̥v. X-101-5

81. हस्तघ्नो विश्वा वयुनानि विद्वान्युमान्युमांसं परि पातु विश्वतः । R̥v. VI-75-14

82. जीमूतस्येव भवति प्रतीकं यद्वर्मी याति समदामुपस्थे ।

अनाविहया तन्वा जय त्वं स त्वा वर्मणो महिमा पिपर्तु । R̥v. VI-75-1

83. दुन्दुभे सजूः इन्द्रेण देवैः । R̥v. VI-47-29

84. R̥v. V-61-2,3

85. ब्रह्मणस्पतिरेता सं कर्मारिइवाधमत् । R̥v. X-72-2

कर्मारो अश्मभिर्द्युभिर्हिरण्यवन्तमिच्छतीन्द्रायेन्द्रो परि स्रव । R̥v. IX-112-2

the Ṛgvedic society. He is said as smelting (*dhmā*) the ore in the fire; hence he is called *dhmātṛ* (the smelter)<sup>86</sup> He smelted ore with the help of fans or bellows made of bird feathers.<sup>87</sup>

The smith used to prepare *Dātra* or *Śriṇi* (sickle),<sup>88</sup> *Phāla* (plough-share)<sup>89</sup> for agricultural purpose. *Asi* denoting a sacrificial knife<sup>90</sup> as well as a spear, used in war,<sup>91</sup> *Paraśu* (axe),<sup>92</sup> *Pavīra* (lance),<sup>93</sup> arrows, *Ṛṣṭi* (spears) and daggers,<sup>94</sup> sharp-edged swords<sup>95</sup> and sharp-pointed shafts,<sup>96</sup> for war, also made by smith. He was supplying weapons of war. The smith was preparing other things for the protection of warriors in battle. The *Ṛgveda* mentions wearing nailed armour,<sup>97</sup> *Śipras*<sup>98</sup> (covering warriors heads) and anklets for the feet.<sup>99</sup>

In the *Ṛgveda Samhitā*, 'Ayas' was also mentioned in various places. But it is difficult to prove that 'ayas' is used in the sense

86. यदीमह त्रितो दिव्युप ध्मातेव धमति शिशीते ध्मातरी यथा । Ṛv. V-9-5

87. जरतीभिः ओषधीभिः पर्णेभिः शकुनानाम् । Ṛv. IX-112-2

88. हस्ते दात्रं चना अददे । Ṛv. VIII-78-10

सृण्यः पक्वं एयात् । Ṛv. X-101-3

89. शुनं न फालः वि कृषन्तु भूमिम् । Ṛv. IV-57-8

90. गात्राणि असीना मिथूकः । Ṛv. I-162-20

91. चकर्त गां इव असिः । Ṛv. X-79-6

92. दुहन्तर परशुः न दुहन्तरः वीलुः । Ṛv. I-127-3

93. यो जनान् महिषौ इवातितस्थौ पवीरवान् । उतापवीरवान् युधा । Ṛv. X-60-3

94. वाशीमन्तः ऋष्टिमन्तो मनीषिणः सुधन्वान इषुमन्तो निषङ्गिणः ।

स्वश्वाः स्थ सुरथाः प्रश्निमातरः स्वायुधा मरुतो याथना शुभम् । Ṛv. V-57-2

95. चोदयाधियमयसो न धाराम् । Ṛv. VI-47-10

96. यदन्तरिक्षे पतयन्ति पर्णिनो दिद्यवस्तिग्ममूर्धानः । Ṛv. VI-46-11

97. त्रिंशच्छतं वर्मिणिन्द्रसाकं । Ṛv. VI-27-6

98. शिप्राः शीर्षसु वितता हिरण्ययी । Ṛv. V-54-11

99. अंसेषु व ऋष्टयः पत्सुखादयो वक्षः सु रुक्मा । Ṛv. V-54-11



of 'bronze' or 'iron'. About the horse, it is said-"His horne is that of gold, his feet are of *ayas*."<sup>100</sup> Agni is said to have the jaws of *ayas*.<sup>101</sup> There is a reference to smiths who were manufacturing superior quality of swords (*ayas*)<sup>102</sup> or knife (*kṣura*).<sup>103</sup>

*Hiraṇya* or gold was the one of the main useful metal in the R̥gvedic society. Gold is the symbol of the Sun in ritual. This metal was used mostly for ornaments and rarely for vessels. The metal was, it is clear, obtained from the beds of rivers. The Sindhu is referred to as *hiraṇyayī*,<sup>104</sup> and the Sarasvatī is also said to be *hiraṇya-vartanī*.<sup>105</sup> Gold was being obtained after smelting ore, and the same was used to produce ornaments like 'nikṣa' (necklace)<sup>106</sup> and 'rukma' (disk of gold)<sup>107</sup> an ornament of breast, 'Karṇa-śobhana' (ear-rings).<sup>108</sup> And the 'Kurīra' (head-ornament)<sup>109</sup> is referred to in connection with the bride's ornament. Golden ornaments for the decoration of the chariots of warriors, golden yokes,<sup>110</sup> golden armour,<sup>111</sup> and golden trappings for horses,<sup>112</sup> too were being made.

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100. हिरण्यशृङ्गोऽयो अस्य पादा मनोजवा अवर इन्द्र आसीत् । Rv. I-163-9

101. अग्निरेको चोदयत्समस्त्वग्निर्वत्राणि दयते पुरुणि । Rv. X-80-2

102. चोदय धियं अयसः न धराम् । Rv. VI-47-10

103. सं नः शिशीहि भुरिजो इव क्षुरं रास्व । Rv. VIII-4-16

104. स्वश्वा सिन्धुः सुरथा सुवासा हिरण्ययी सुकृता वाजिनीवती । Rv. X-75-8

105. Rv. VI-61-7

106. अर्हन् निष्कं यजतं विश्वरूपं । Rv. II-33-10, V-19-3 etc.

107. वक्षः सु रुक्मा रभसासो अज्जयः । Rv. I-166-10, IV-16-5; V-53-4 etc

108. अतनः कर्णशोभनापुरुणि । Rv. VIII-78-3

109. रथीमः आसन् प्रतिधवः कुरीरं । Rv. X-85-8

110. वि जनाञ्छ्यावतः शितिपादो आख्यत्रथं हिरण्य प्रउगं वहन्तः Rv. I-35-5

111. Rv. IV-53-2

112. प्र यन्तु वाजास्तविषीभिरग्नयः शुभे संमिश्लाः पृषतिरयुक्षत । Rv. III-26-4

#### iv. Means of Trade and Transportation:

Economically, the Ṛgvedic land was characterised by anomalous distribution of various products of human need. Such as the Sindhu and the Paruṣṇī valleys supplied horses, honey, wool, and garments.<sup>113</sup> Such products were often transported from the various areas to the consumers.

The importance of transportation as realised by the Ṛgvedic people can be assessed from the Aryan conception of presiding deities of the three regions, i.e. lithosphere, hydrosphere and atmosphere. Pūṣan<sup>114</sup> is figured as the master of land transportation, Varuṇa<sup>115</sup> as the guardian of navigation and Aśvins<sup>116</sup> as the rulers of the sea and air routes.

The *anas* (cart)<sup>117</sup> and *ratha* (chariot)<sup>118</sup> were the means of transportation on land. The *Ṛgveda Samhitā* deals with the construction of the chariot. They were made by carpenters and chariot makers. The following *mantra* describes :<sup>119</sup>

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113. स्वश्वा सिन्धुः सुरथा सुवासा हिरण्ययी सुकृता वाजिनीवती ।  
 ऊर्णावती युवतिः सीलमावत्युताधि वस्ते सुभगा मधूवृधम् । Ṛv. X-75-8  
 उत स्म ते परुष्यामूर्णा वसत शुन्ध्यवः । Ṛv. V-52-9
- 114 वयमु त्वा पथस्पते रथं न वाजसातये । धिये पूषन्नयुज्महि ।। Ṛv. VI-53-1
- 115 वेदा ये वीनां पदमन्तरिक्षेण पतताम् । वेद नावः समुद्रियः ।। Ṛv. I-25-7
- 116 अनारम्भणे तदवीरयेथामनास्थाने अग्रभणे समुद्रे ।  
 यदश्विना ऊहथुर्भुज्यमस्तं शतारित्रां नावमातस्थिवांसम् ।। Ṛv. I-116-5  
 तुग्रे ह भुज्युमश्विनोदमेधे रयिं न कश्चिमृवाँ अवाहाः ।  
 तमूहथुर्नोभिरात्मान्वतीभिरन्तपरिक्षप्रुद्धिरपोदकाभिः ।। Ṛv. I-116-3
- 117 अपोषा अनसः सरत्संपिष्टादह बभ्युषी । Ṛv. IV-30-10  
 X-85-10 ; 86-18 etc
- 118 रथीतमं रथीनां वाजानां सत्पतिं पतिम् । Ṛv. I-11-1  
 अया निजग्धिरोजसा रथसङ्गे धने हिते । Ṛv. IX-53-2
119. Ṛv. III-53-17

“May the horses be steady, the axle be strong, the pole be not defective; the yoke not be rotten; may Indra preserve the two yoke-pins from decay, car with the uninjured fellys, be ready for us.”

The *Rgveda* informs, the main part of cart and chariot had two wheels (*cakra*).<sup>120</sup> The wheels consisted of a rim (*pavi*),<sup>121</sup> a felly (*pradhi*),<sup>122</sup> spokes (*ara*)<sup>123</sup> and nave (*nabhya*).<sup>124</sup> The rim and felly together constituted the *nemi*.<sup>125</sup> The hole in the nave was called *kha*,<sup>126</sup> and into it, the end of the axle (*akṣa*)<sup>127</sup> was inserted. To the axle, was attached the body of the chariot (*kośa*).<sup>128</sup> At right angles to the axle was fixed the pole of the chariot (*prāuga*). Oxen and horses were commonly used to draw the vehicles (*anaḍvāḥ*).<sup>129</sup> The reins (*raśmi*)<sup>130</sup> were fastened to the bit in the horses' mouth. The driver controlled the horses by

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120. सप्त युज्जन्ति रथमेकचक्रमेको अश्वो वहति सप्तनामा ।  
त्रिनाभिचक्रमजरमनर्वं यत्रेमा विश्वा भुवनाधि तस्तुः ।। *Rv.* I-164-2  
I-130-9 ; 155-6; II-174-5 etc.
121. त्रयः पवयो मधुवाहने रथे सोमस्य वेनामनु विश्व इद्विदुः । *Rv.* I-34-2  
रुक्मो न चित्रः स्वधितीवान्यव्या रथस्य जङ्गनन्त भूम ।। *Rv.* I-88-2  
I-139-3 ; 166-10 etc.
122. स्तोमा आसन्प्रतिधयः कुरीरं छन्द ओपशः । *Rv.* X-85-8
123. यत्सीमनु क्रतुना विश्वथा विभुररात्र नेमिः परिभूरजायथाः । *Rv.* I-141-9  
I-32-15; V-13-6 etc
124. यस्मिन्विश्वानि काव्या चक्रे नाभिरिव श्रिता । *Rv.* VIII-41-6
125. सोढु राजा क्षयति चर्षणीनामरात्र नेमिः परिताबभूव । *Rv.* I-32-15  
I-141-9; II-5-3 etc.
126. खे रथस्य खेऽनसः खे युगस्य शतक्रतो । *Rv.* VIII-91-7  
VIII-77-3; X-56-3
127. ऋणोरक्षं न चक्रयोः । *Rv.* I-30-14
128. श्वोतन्ति कोशा उप वो रथेष्वघृतमुक्षता मधुवर्णमर्चते । *Rv.* I-87-2
129. समिन्द्रेय गमनद्वाहं य आवहदुशीनराण्या अनः । *Rv.* X-59-10  
शुक्रावनाड्वावास्तां यदयात्सीर्या गृहम् । *Rv.* X-85-10
130. यत्र मन्थां विबध्नते रश्मीन्यमितवा इव । *Rv.* I-28-4

reins. Normally, a pair of animals was harnessed at a time to a *Ratha*, but sometimes, only one<sup>131</sup> or two different animals such as ox and buffalo were yoked.

In the *Ṛgvedic* period, transportation was carried through river-routes. The *Ṛgveda* mentions boat (*nau*)<sup>132</sup> propelled with oars (*aritra*)<sup>133</sup> and rower of a boat (*aritrī*). The water transportation as called (*nāvya*)<sup>134</sup> navigable. Some times boats, rafts (*dyumna*) were also used.

There are clear references in the hymns of the *Ṛgveda*, to trading in distant lands for profit.<sup>135</sup> The prayers and oblations offered for "gaining hundred treasures"<sup>136</sup> are also probably those of merchants seeking divine aid for success in trade. Apart from trade with foreign countries, or alien tribes, there must have been quite extensive inland trade, but no definite details are available. Haggling in the market was, however, well-known.

The exchange of commodities on the principle of barter seems to have been in vogue, but cow had already come to be regarded as a unit of value.<sup>137</sup> There might have been other recognized units of value. Great importance attaches to one such unit called *niṣka*. It meant originally a gold ornament of the shape of a necklace or a necklet. When, however, in a hymn, the seer celebrates the receipt

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131. गव्यन्त इन्द्रं सखाय विप्रा अश्वयन्तो वृषणं वाजयन्तः *Ṛv.* X-131-3

132. *Ṛv.* I-131-2; II-39-4 etc.

133. शतारित्रां नावमातस्त्रिवांसम्। *Ṛv.* I-116-5

134. *Ṛv.* I-33-11 ; I-80-8

135. *Ṛv.* I-56-2

136. इमां धियं शतसेयाय बलाय। *Ṛv.* II-18-3

137. *Ṛv.* IV-24-10

of a hundred *niṣkas* with a hundred horses, as a gift, he could hardly be referring to a hundred necklets.<sup>138</sup> So it probably came to be used as a sort of currency even during the Ṛgvedic age.

In fine the physiogeographic frame of the *Ṛgveda* finds out economic factors of Ṛgvedic India. Of course, there is non-availability of systematic statistical information of the economic basis in different patterns. Yet the available details of the economy of Ṛgvedic people help us to visualise the economic systems in the regional units. As it is seen, the economic basis of Ṛgvedic India is mainly formed with three component organs i.e., Agriculture, cattle-breeding and industrial occupations. The illustrations given above, show the fact that there was gradual transformation from pastoral to agricultural economy in the during the Ṛgvedic times.




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138. शतं राज्ञो नाधमानस्य निष्क्राञ्छतः। *Rv.* I-26-2

### CHAPTER - III

## A CRITICAL EXPOSITION OF THE HISTORICAL COMPOSITIONS (HYMNS)

This chapter reads a critical exposition of the Dasarajna war, Rgvedic tribes, royal kings, the Danastutis, the Akhyanas, the socio-political institutions and the elements of religion as well as science.

### 1. The Dāśarājña War

The *Dāśarājña* war is historically most important fact recorded in the *Ṛgveda Samhitā*. The *Ṛgveda* is a book containing devotional songs in praise of various gods. Yet, the narration of a historical events like *Dāśarājña* in its conspectus is really very remarkable. In ancient Indian history, the *Dāśarājña* war bears very vital and important aspect. U.C. Sharma remarks - "The Indo-Aryan settlers have already been established and had already their roots shown in the soil of this country. They were divided in several tribes and peoples. It seems, there was a tough competition among them to gain power and superiority over others. The aid of non-Aryan tribes was being sought in this conflict of overlordship".<sup>1</sup>

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1. U.C. Sharma, *The Viśvāmitras and the Vasiṣṭas*, Viveka Publications, Aligarh, 1975, p-269.

The term 'Dāśarājñā' has been mentioned thrice in the *Ṛgveda*, and once in the *Atharvaveda*.<sup>2</sup> The most important event of 'Dāśarājñā' is recorded in the *Ṛgveda Maṇḍala*, III-53 and VII-18, 33 and 83. The third *Maṇḍala* is the seership of Viśvāmitra and seventh is of Vasiṣṭha. The number 'Daśa' in the word *Dāśarājñā* is only descriptive and not definitive. It does not refer to a definite number ten, but is intended to convey a number, slightly more or less than ten. It is found that the leader of the Bharatās, Sudās Paijavana and of Tṛtsus fought against the allied forces of the *Dāśarājñā* kings. Aryan and non-Aryan tribes allied to the latter, took part in the war. It is to be noted here that Puru, Yadu, Turvaśa, Anu, Druhyu, Alina, Paktha, Bhalāṇas, Śiva, Viśāṇin, Śimyu, Vaikarṇa, etc., form the group of *Dāśarājñā* kings.

### **An Outline of the Dāśarājñā War**

King Sudās Paijavana, with a small army of his followers, the Bharatas, was once attacked by the allies of the *Dāśarājñā* kings and were cornered by the latter on the banks of high-flowing Paruṣṇī. Seeing his futility of resistance, king Sudās prayed the god Indra, and he won the war with the help thereof. From the description in the hymn, it appears that some of the ten allies tried to pursue Sudās by crossing the river after him. They were however, drowned because, as soon as they entered the river, they were overpowered by an onrushing flood sent down by Indra. Some of them tried to make the waters of the river shallow by digging channels in different directions; but they miserably failed in their endeavour and met with severe

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2. *Ṛv.* VII-33-3,5 ; 83-8 ; *Av.* XX-128-12.

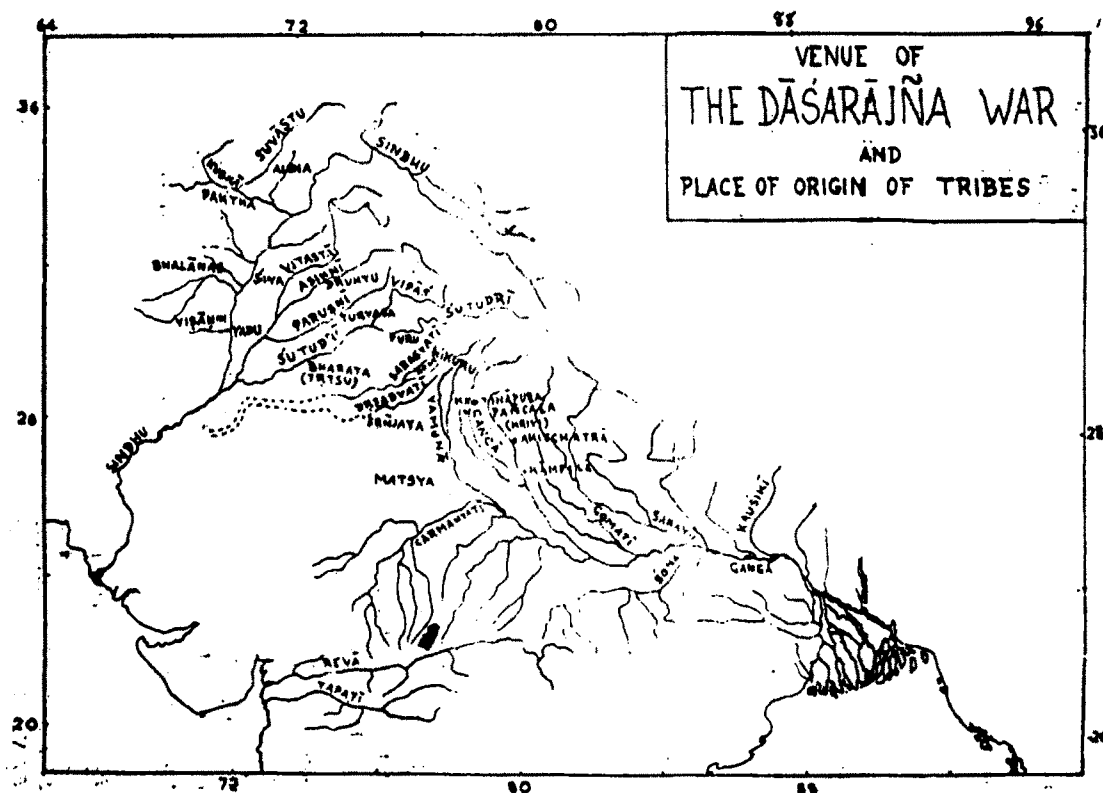
disaster. Many were washed off by the powerful flowing currents of the river. Some who succeeded in reaching the other bank but immediately were killed by Sudās and his Bharatas who were waiting to pounce upon them.

The fifteenth *mantra* in the eighteenth hymn of the seventh *Maṇḍala* tells that Tr̥tsus with the inspiration from Indra, ran down like the released waters evidently against what had remained of the combined forces of the *Dāśarājñā* kings after the terrible disaster with which they met in the waters of the flooded Paruṣṇī. Here, probably as may be inferred, Sudās's warriors inflicted a decisive defeat upon them. They were put to flight and had to leave all their important and proud possessions to the victor. On this occasion too, they must have tried a retreat across the river, though without success, and it is possible that the description in *mantras* VII. 18. 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, refers to the crossing of the enemy on either way. The reference that the two armies, had actually come to grips at some stage, appears to be a fact from two *mantras* VII. 18. 16 and 17, wherein Indra is said to have laid low on the ground the arrogant enemy, and to have killed a lioness through a lamb etc. As suggested in the *mantra* VII. 18. 18, Bheda and his allies the Ajās, the Śigrus and Yakṣus, who belonged very likely to an earlier phase of the *Dāśarājñā* or to another war. They were won on the banks of the Yamunā by Sudās under the spiritual guidance of the Tr̥tsus. The killing of Devaka and Śambara, however mentioned in *mantra* VII. 18. 20, seem to be a reference to earlier events which took place in reign of Sudās's grand-father Divodāsa, if they are not to be regarded as purely mythical.



### Battle-field of the Dāśarājna War

In the Ṛgvedic references, at least two battle-fields are notable. One is bank of Paruṣṇī and the other being the bank of Yamunā. So the geographical battle-field of this war may be said to be bounded by Paruṣṇī in the West and the Yamunā in the east. The river Paruṣṇī is later called Irāvati, hence the present name is Rāvi. The capital of Sudās Paijavana could be somewhere on the famous Sarasvatī river which falls between Paruṣṇī and Yamunā. Thus, the modern states of the Hariyana and the Punjab in India and the eastern part of the west Punjab in Pakistan may well be ascertained as the area of operation of the notable events of the great *Dāśarājña* war. Following is the map thereof :



On the basis of the references found in the III *maṇḍala*, the seer Viśvāmitra could be said to be the priest of the Bharatas.<sup>3</sup> He conducted king Sudās and his troops over the waters of Vipāś and Śutudrī. He helped Sudās for the expansion of the Bharatas. The Bhojas in the *mantra* III-53-7, said that they are descendants of Sudās. Viśvāmitra helped them for invokeing Indra. They offered to Viśvāmitra countless wealth in the horse-sacrifice. In the *mantra* III-53-9, it is said that Viśvāmitra escorted Sudās over the waters of the mighty rivers Vipāś and Śutudrī. The hymn III. 33 presents a dialogue between Viśvāmitra and these two rivers, in which it is described that Viśvāmitra wanted to make them fordable so that the advancing Bharatas could go forward. It shows that formerly Viśvāmitra was the leader of the Bharatas and helped them west-ward expedition. He was also the priest in the horse-sacrifice, which was performed by Sudās to celebrate his victory. Viśvāmitra prayed to Indra and helped the Bharatas. In this sacrifice, he used his divine powers. The relevant *mantras* of the *Rgveda* III-53, are as under:

“These sacrifices are the Bhojas, of whom the diversified Ṇgirasas are the priests; and the heroic sons of the expeller of the foes of the gods from heaven, bestowing riches upon Viśvāmitra at the sacrifice of a thousand victims, prolong his life.”<sup>4</sup>

The great *Rṣi*, the generator of the gods, attracted by the deities, the overlooker of the leaders at holy rites, Viśvāmitra arrested the

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3. विश्वामित्रिषिः सुदासः पैजवनस्य पुरोहितो बभूव । पैजवनः पिजवनस्य पुत्रः ।

Yāska, *Nirukta* II-24.

4. इमे भोजा अङ्गिरसो विरूपा दिवस्पुत्रासो असुरस्य वीराः ।

विश्वामित्राय ददतो मघानि सहस्रसावे प्र तिरन्त आयुः ।। *Rv.* III-53-7

watery stream when he sacrificed for Sudās; Indra, with the Kuśikas, was pleased.<sup>5</sup>

Sages and Saints, overlookers of the leaders of sacred rites, Kuśikas, when the Soma is expressed with stones at the sacrifice, then exhilarating the gods with praise, sing the holy strain (aloud) like (screaming) swans, and together with the gods, drink the sweet juice of the Soma.<sup>6</sup>

Approach Kuśikas, the stead of Sudās; animate him, and let him loose to win riches for the Rājā; for the king (of gods) has slain Vṛtra in the East, in the west, in the North, therefore let Sudās worship him in the best regions of the earth.<sup>7</sup>

I have made Indra glorified by these two, heaven and earth and this prayer of Viśvāmitra protects the race of Bharatas.”<sup>8</sup>

A picturesque description of the *Dāśarājñā* war is recorded in the seventh *Maṇḍala* of which Vasiṣṭha is the seer. The subject-matter is found in the three hymns i.e. VII-18, 33, and 83. It's description is quite natural. Of these hymns, eighteenth is most important in giving significant elements about the *Dāśarājñā* war.

The eighteenth hymn is a type of *Dānastuti*. Vasiṣṭha praises donations received from king Sudās after successful completion of

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5. महौ ऋषिर्देवजा देवजूतोऽस्तभ्नसिन्धुमर्णवं नृचक्षाः।  
विश्वामित्रो यदवहत्सुदासमप्रियायत कुशिकेभिरिन्द्रः॥ Rv. III-53-9
  6. हंसा इव कृणुथ श्लोक मद्रिभिर्मदन्तो गीर्भिरध्वरे सुते सचा।  
देवेभिर्विप्रा ऋषयो नृचक्षासो वि पिबध्वं कुशिकाः सोम्यं मधु॥ Rv. III-53-10
  7. उपप्रेत कुशिकाश्चेतयध्वमश्वं राये प्र मुञ्चता सुदासः।  
राजा वृत्रं जङ्घनत्प्रागपागुदगथां यजाते वर आ पृथिव्याः॥ Rv. III-53-11
  8. य इमे रोदसी उभे अहमिन्द्रमतुष्टवम्।  
विश्वामित्रस्य रक्षति ब्रह्मेदं भारतं जनम्॥ Rv. III-53-12

the sacrifice. Also, the hymn gives a vivid description of the *Dāśarājñā* war. It was between king Sudās, the leader of the Bharatas, on the one side, and *Dāśarājñā* kings on the other. The battle took place on the bank of Paruṣṇī. The relevant *mantras* describing the *Dāśarājñā* war are as follows:

“The adorable Indra made the well-known deep waters of the Paruṣṇī fordable for Sudās, and converted the vehement awakening imprecation of the Sacrificer into the calumny of the rivers.”<sup>9</sup>

Turvaśa, who was proceeding at solemn rites, diligent in sacrifice went to Sudās for wealth; but like fishes restricted to the element of water; the Bhṛguś and Druhyus quickly assailed them of these two everywhere going, the friend of Sudās, Indra rescued his friend.<sup>10</sup>

Those who dress the oblation, those who pronounce auspicious words, those who abstain from penance, those who bear horns in their hands, those who bestow happiness on the world by sacrifice, glorify that Indra who recovered the cattle of the Ārya from the plunderers, who slew the enemies in battle.<sup>11</sup>

The evil-disposed and stupid enemies of Sudās, crossing the flooded Paruṣṇī river, have broken its banks; but he by his greatness pervades the earth, and Kavi, the son of Cāyamāna, like a falling victim, sleeps in death.<sup>12</sup>

9. अर्णासि चित्प्रधान मुदास इन्द्रो गाधान्यकृणोत्सुपारा ।

शर्धन्तं शिम्बुमुचथस्य नव्यः शापं सिन्धूनामकृणोदशस्तीः ॥ Rv. VII-18-5

10. पुरोळा इत्तुर्वशो यक्षुगसीद्राये मत्स्यासो निशिता अपीव ।

श्रुष्टिं चक्रुर्भृगवो दुह्यवश्च सखा सखायमतरद्विपूचोः ॥ Rv. VII-18-6

11. आ पक्थासो भलानसो भनन्तालिनसो विषाणिनः शिवासः ।

आ योऽनयत्सधमा आर्यस्य गव्या तृत्सुभ्यो अजगन्मुधा नृन् ॥ Rv. VII-18-7

12. दुराध्यो अदितिं स्वेवयन्तोऽचेतसो वि जगृभ्रे परुष्णीम् ।

मह्नाविव्यक्पृथिवीं पत्यमानः पशुष्कविरशयच्चायमानः ॥ Rv. VII-18-8

The waters; followed their regular course to the Paruṣṇī, nor wandered beyond it: the quick courser of the king came to the accessible places, and Indra made the idly-talking enemies, with their numerous progeny, subject among men to Sudās.<sup>13</sup>

They who ride on parti-colored cattle, the Maruts dispatched by Prṣṇi, and recalling the engagement made by them with their friend Indra, came like cattle from the pasturage, when left without a herdsman; the exulting *Niyut* steeds brought them quickly against the foe.<sup>14</sup>

Here Indra created the Maruts for the assistance of the Rājā, who ambitious of fame, slew one-and twenty of the men on the two banks of Paruṣṇī as a well-looking priest lops the sacred grass in the chamber of sacrifice.<sup>15</sup>

You, the bearer of the thunderbolt, drowned, Śrutu, Kavaṣa, Vṛddha, and afterwards Druhyu, in the waters; for they, Indra who are devoted to you, and glorify you, preferring your friendship, enjoy it.<sup>16</sup>

Indra, in his might, quickly demolished all, their strongholds, and their seven kinds of cities; he has given the dwelling of the son of Anu to Tṛtsu; may we, by propitiating Indra, conquer in battle the ill-speaking man.<sup>17</sup>

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13. ईयुरर्थं न न्यर्थं परूष्णीमाशुश्चनेदभिपित्वं जगाम ।  
सुदास इन्द्रः सुतुकाँ अमित्रानरन्धयन्मानुपे वध्निवाचः ॥ Rv. VII-18-9
14. ईयुर्गावो न यवसादगोपा यथाकृतमभि मित्रं चितासः ।  
पृश्निगावः पृश्निनिप्रेतितासः श्रुष्टिं चक्रुर्नियुतो रन्तयश्च ॥ Rv. VII-18-10
15. एकं च यो विंशतिं च श्रवस्या वैकर्णयोर्जनान्राजा न्यस्तः ।  
दस्मो न सद्यन्नि शिशाति बर्हिः शूरः सर्गमकृणोदिन्द्र एषाम् ॥ Rv. VII-18-11
16. अथ श्रुतं कवषं वृद्धमप्स्वनु दुह्यं नि वृणग्वज्रबाहुः ।  
वृणाना अत्र सखाय सख्यं त्वायन्तो ये अमदन्ननु त्वा ॥ Rv. VII-18-12
17. वि सद्यो विश्वा दुहितान्येषाम्नुन्द्रः पुरः सहसा सप्त दर्दः ।  
व्यानवस्य तृत्सवे गयं भाग्जेष्म पूरुं विदथे मृधवाचम् ॥ Rv. VII-18-13

The warriors of the Anus and Druhyus, intending to carry off the cattle, hostile to the pious Sudās, perished to the number of sixty-six thousand six hundred and sixty; such are all the glorious acts of Indra.<sup>18</sup>

Those hostile Tṛtsus, ignorantly contending with Indra, fled routed as rapidly as rivers on a downward course, and being discomfited, abandoned all their possessions to Sudās.<sup>19</sup>

Indra has scattered over the earth the hostile rival of the hero Sudās the senior of Indra, the appropriator of the oblation ; Indra has battled the wrath of the wrathful enemy, and the (foe) advancing on the way against Sudās has taken the path of flight.<sup>20</sup>

Indra has effected a valuable donation by a pauper; he has slain an old lion by a goat; he has cut the angles of the sacrificial post with a needle; he has given all the spoils of the enemy to Sudās.<sup>21</sup>

Your numerous enemies, Indra, have been reduced to subjection; effect at some time or other the subjugation of the turbulent Bheda, who holds men praising you as guilty of wickedness; hurl, Indra, your sharp thunderbolt against him.<sup>22</sup>

18. नि गव्यवोऽनवो दुह्यवश्च पष्टिः शाता सुषुपुः षट् सहस्रा ।  
पष्टिर्वीरासो अधि षड् दुवोयु विश्वेदिन्द्रस्य वीर्या कृतानि ॥ Rv. VII-18-14

19. इन्द्रेणैते तृत्सवो वेविपाणा आपो न सृष्टा अधवन्त नीचीः ।  
दुर्मित्रासः प्रकलविन्मिमाना जहुर्विश्वानि भोजना सुदासे ॥ Rv. VII-18-15

20. अर्धं वीरस्य शृतपामनिन्द्रं परा शर्धन्तं नुनुदे अभि क्षाम् ।  
इन्द्रो मन्युम्यो मिमाय भेजे पथो वर्तन्ति पत्यमानः ॥ Rv. VII-18-16

21. आर्धेण चित्तद्वेकं चकार सिंहं चित्पेत्वेना जघान ।  
अव स्रक्तिर्वेश्यावृश्चदिन्द्रः प्रायच्छद्विश्वा भोजना सुदासे ॥ Rv. VII-18-17

22. शश्वन्तो हि शत्रवो राघुष्टे भेदस्य चिच्छर्धतो विन्द रन्धिम् ।  
माता एनः स्तुवतो यः कृणोति तिग्मं तस्मिन्नि जही वज्रमिन्द्र ॥ Rv. VII-18-18

23. आवदिन्द्रं यमुना तृत्सश्च प्रात्र भेदं सर्वताता मु,अपायत् ।  
अजासश्च शिग्रवो यक्षवश्च बलिं शीर्पाणि जभ्रुश्चानि ॥ Rv. VII-18-19

The dwellers on the Yamunā and Tṛtsus glorified Indra when he killed Bheda in battle; the Ajās, the Śigrus, the Yakṣus, offered to him as a sacrifice the heads of the horses killed in the combat.<sup>23</sup>

Yours favours, Indra and your bounties, whether old or new cannot be counted like the recurring dawns; you have slain Devaka, the son of Manyamāna, and of your own will have cast down Śambara from the west mountain.<sup>24</sup>

Parāśara, the destroyer of hundreds of Rākṣasās, and Vasiṣṭha they who devoted to you, have glorified you in every dwelling, neglect not the friendship of you, (their) benefactor; therefore prosperous days dawn upon the pious.<sup>25</sup>

Praising the liberality of Sudās, the grandson of Devavata, the son of Pajjavana, the donor of two hundred cows, and of two chariots with two wives, I worthy of the gift, circumambulate you Agni, like the ministrant priest in the chamber.<sup>26</sup>

Four horses, having golden trappings, going steadily on a difficult road, celebrated on the earth, the excellent and acceptable gifts made to me by Sudās, the son of the Pajjavana, bear me as a son to obtain food and progeny.<sup>27</sup>

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24. न त इन्द्र सुमतयो न रायः संचक्षे पूर्वा उपसो न नूताः।

देवकं चिन्मान्यमानं जघन्ताव त्मना बृहतः शम्बरं भेत् ॥ Rv. VII-18-20

25. प्रये ग्रहादममदुस्त्वाया पराशरः शतयातुर्वसिष्टः।

न ते भोजस्य सख्यं मृपन्ताधा सूरिभ्यः सुदिना व्युच्छान् ॥ Rv. VII-18-21

26. द्वे नमुर्देववतः शते गोर्द्धा रथा वधूमन्ता सुदासः।

अर्हन्नग्ने पैजवानस्य दानं होतेव सद्य पर्येमि रेभन् ॥ Rv. VII-18-22

27. चत्वारो मा पैजवानस्य दानाः स्मद्दिष्टयः कृशनिनो निरेके।

रुज्रासो मा पृथिविष्टाः सुदासस्तोकं तोकाय श्रवसे वहन्ति ॥ Rv. VII-18-23

The seven worlds praise Sudās as if he was Indra; him whose fame spreads through the spacious heaven and earth; who, munificent, has distributed wealth on every eminent person, and for whom the flowing rivers have destroyed Yudhyamadhi; in war.<sup>28</sup>

Maruts, leader of rites, attend upon this prince as you did upon Divodāsa, the father of Sudās, favour the prayers of the devout son of Pijavana and may his strength be unimpaired, undecaying.<sup>29</sup>

The nineteenth hymn of the seventh *Maṇḍala*, in three *mantras* offers the description in which, Indra is said to have shown favour to Sudās and Turvaśa and Yādava. The relevant *mantras* are as follows:

Undaunted (Indra), you, have protected with all your protections Sudās, the offerer of oblations, you have protected in battles with enemies for the possession of the earth, Trasadasyu, the son of Purukutsa, and Puru.<sup>30</sup>

Your favours, Indra, to Sudās, the donor of offerings, the presenter of oblations infinite; showerer of benefits, I yoke you for your vigorous steeds, may our prayers reach you who are mighty to whom many rites are addressed.<sup>31</sup>

May we, Maghavan, leaders in your adoration, regarded as dear friends, be happy in our homes; about to bestow felicity upon Atithigvan, humiliate Turvaśa; humiliate the son of Yadu.<sup>32</sup>

28. यस्य श्रवो रोदसि अन्तरूर्वी शीर्णोशीर्णो विबभाज विभक्ता ।

ससेदिन्द्रं न स्रवतो गृणन्ति नि युध्यामधिमशिशदभीके ॥ *Rv.* VII-18-24

29. इमं नरो मरुतः सञ्छतानु दिवोदासं न पितरं सुदासः ।

अविष्टनां पैजवानस्य केतं दुणाशं क्षत्रमजरं दुवोयुः ॥ *Rv.* VII-18-25

30. त्वं धृष्णो धृषता वीतहव्यं प्रावो विश्वाभिरुतिभिः सुदासम् ।

प्र पौरुकुत्सिं त्रसदस्युमावः क्षोत्रसाता वृत्रहत्येषु पूरुम् ॥ *Rv.* VII-19-3

31. सना ता त इन्द्र भोजनानि गतहव्याय दाशुषै सुदासे ।

वृष्णे ते हरी वृषणा युनज्मि व्यन्तु ब्रह्मणि पुरुषाक वाजम् ॥ *Rv.* VII-19-6

32. प्रियास इत्ते मधवन्नभिष्टौ नरो मदेम शरणे सखायः ।

नि तुर्वशं नि यद्वां शिशिह्यतिथिगवाय शंस्यं करिष्यन् ॥ *Rv.* VII-19-8



Another hymn (VII-33-1 to 6) in the *Rgveda* deals with *Dāśarājña* war. The glorious role played by Vasiṣṭha in this war is prominent. It is said that the victory in the war was achieved through the priestly services of Vasiṣṭha. The warriors are shown as completely dependent on their priest Vasiṣṭha. He prayed to Indra to help them and defeat their enemies. The dress and habits of the Tṛtsus people are also described. Those *mantras* as under :

The white-complexioned accomplishers of holy ceremonies, wearing the lock of the hair on the right side, have afforded me delight, when, rising up, I call the leaders of rites to the sacred grass; the Vasiṣṭhas, My son should never be far from me.<sup>33</sup>

Disgracing Paśadyumna, they brought from afar the fierce Indra, when drinking the ladle of Soma at his sacrifice, to receive the libation of Sudās ; Indra hastened from the effused Soma of Paśadhyumna, the son of Vayata to the Vasiṣṭas.<sup>34</sup>

In the some manner was Sudās, enabled by them easily to cross the Sindhu river ; in the same manner, through them he easily slew his foes so in like manner, Vasiṣṭas, through your prayers did Indra defend Sudās in the war with the ten kings.<sup>35</sup>

By your prayers, leaders of rites is effected the gratification of your progenitors; I have set in mention the axle of the chariot; be not

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33. श्वित्यञ्चो मा दक्षिणतस्कपर्द धियंजिन्वासो अभि हि प्रमन्दुः।

उत्तिष्ठन्वोचे परि बर्हिषो नृत्र मे दूरादवितवे वसिष्ठाः॥ *Rv.* VII-33-1

34. दूरादिन्द्रमनयन्ना सुतेन तिरो वैशन्तमति पान्तमुग्रम्।

पाशद्युम्नस्य वायतस्य सोमोत्सुतादिन्द्रोऽवृणीता वसिष्ठान्॥ *Rv.* VII-33-2

35. एवेन्नु कं सिन्धुमेभिस्तारेवेन्नु कं भेदमेभिर्जघान।

एवेन्नु कं दाशराज्ञे सुधासं प्रावदिन्द्रो ब्रह्मणा वो वसिष्ठाः॥ *Rv.* VII-33-3

you inert, for by your sacred meters, Vasiṣṭas (chaunted) with a loud voice, you sustain vigour in Indra.<sup>36</sup>

Suffering from thirst, soliciting rain, supported by Tṛtsus in the war with the ten kings, the Vasiṣṭhas made Indra radiant as the son ; Indra heard the praises of Vasiṣṭhs glorifying him and bestowed a spacious region on the Tṛtsus.<sup>37</sup>

The Bharatas, inferior to their foes, where shorn of their positions, like the staves for driving cattle, stripped of their leaves and branches; but Vasiṣṭha became their family priest, and the people of the Tṛtsus prospered.<sup>38</sup>

In the *Rgveda*, VII-83 is the third hymn in this regard. Only first eight *mantras* of the hymn describe the events of the *Dāśarājñā* war. The twin deities Indra and Varuna, are invoked by Vasiṣṭha. Sudās fought against both Dāsa group and Āryan group. The Tṛtsus provided immense help to the Bharatas. The description there in this hymn is as follows:

Indra and Varuṇa, leaders of rites, contemplating your affinity and desirous of cattle, the worshippers, armed with large sickles, have proceeded to the east to cut the sacred grass; destroy, Indra and Varuna your enemies, whether Dāsas or Āryas and defend Sudās with your protection.<sup>39</sup>

36. जुष्टी नरो ब्रह्मणा वः पितृणामक्षमव्ययं न किला रिषाथ ।

यच्छ्ववरीषु बृहता रवेणेन्द्रे शुष्ममदधाता वसिष्ठाः ।। *Rv.* VII-33-4

37. उद्यामिवेतृष्णजो नाथितासोऽदिद्युर्दाशराज्ञे वृतासः ।

वसिष्ठस्य स्तुवता इन्द्रो अश्रोदुरं तृत्सुभ्यो अकृणोदु लोकम् ।। *Rv.* VII-33-5

38. दण्डा इवेदोअजनास आसन्यरिच्छिन्ना भरता अर्भकासः ।

अभवच्छ पुरेता वसिष्ठ आदितृत्सूनां विशो अप्रथन्त ।। *Rv.* VII-33-6

39. युवां नरा पश्यमानस आप्यं प्राचा गव्यन्तः प्रथुपर्शवो ययुः ।

दासा च वृत्रा हतमार्याणी च सुदासमिन्द्रावरुणावसावतम् ।। *Rv.* VII-83-1

Where men assemble with uplifted banners, in whatever conflict, there is some thing unfavourable; where living beings, looking to heaven are in fear, there Indra and Varuṇa, speak to us (encouragement).<sup>40</sup>

The ends of the earth are beheld laid waste; the clamour has ascended, Indra and Varuṇa, to heaven; the adversaries of my people approach me; having heard my invocation, come for my defiance.<sup>41</sup>

Indra and Varuṇa, you protect Sudās, overwhelming the yet unassailed Bheda with your fatal weapons; hear the prayers of these Tṛtsus in the time of battle, so that my ministration may have borne them fruit.<sup>42</sup>

Indra and Varuṇa, the murderous weapons of my enemy distress me; foes almost the malignant (assail me); you two are sovereigns over both (celestial and terrestrial) wealth ; protect us therefore on the day of battle.<sup>43</sup>

Both Sudās and Tṛtsus call upon you two, Indra and Varuṇa in combats for the acquirement of wealth, when you defend Sudās, together with the Tṛtsus, when attacked by the ten kings.<sup>44</sup>

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40. यत्रा नरः समयन्ते कृतध्वजो यस्मिन्नाजा भवति किं च न प्रियम्  
यत्रा भयन्ते भुवना स्वर्दुःशस्तत्रा न इन्द्रावरुणाधि वोचतम् ।। *Rv.* VII-83-2
41. सं भूम्या अन्ता ध्वसिरा अर्दुक्षतेन्द्रवरुणा दिवि घोषा आरुहत् ।  
अस्तुर्जनानामुप मामरातयोऽर्वागवसा हवनश्रुता गतम् ।। *Rv.* VII-83-3
42. इन्द्रावरुणावदनाभिरप्रति भेदं वन्वन्ता प्र सुदासमावतम् ।  
ब्रह्माण्येषां शृणुतं हवीमनि सत्या तृत्सूनामभवत्सुरोहितः ।। *Rv.* VII-83-4
43. इन्द्रावरुणावभ्या तपन्ति माघान्यर्यो वनुषामरातयः ।  
युवं हि वस्व उभयस्य राजथोऽध स्मा नोऽवतं पार्ये दिवि ।। *Rv.* VII-83-5
44. युवां हवन्त उभयास आजिष्विन्द्रं च वस्वो वरुणं च सातये ।  
यत्र राजभिर्दुःशभिर्निबाधितं प्र सुदास मावतं तृत्सुभिः सह ।। *Rv.* VII-83-6

The ten confederated irreligious kings did not prevail, Indra and Varuṇa, against Sudās ; the praise of the leaders of rites, the offered of sacrificial food, was fruitful ; the gods were present at their sacrifices.<sup>45</sup>

You gave vigour, Indra and Varuṇa, to Sudās when surrounded on all sides by the ten kings in the country where the pious Ṛtsus, walking in whiteness and wearing braided hair, worshipped with oblations and praise.<sup>46</sup>

Such is the description of the *Dāśarājñā* war. As regards this war, H.D. Velankar<sup>47</sup> remarks, “we do not get here any important information about the actual fight between the two parties, but only the frustration of the attempts of the powerful enemy to overpower Sudās and his Bharatas” Highlighting the reason for *Dāśarājñā* war, he further says, “the *Dāśarājñā* war was a result of the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice; the chiefs and kings who were defeated in the course of the triumphant march of the sacrificial horse saw an opportunity of winning back their freedom and wielded war against Sudas.”<sup>48</sup> Those relevant *mantras* as under:

"Approach, Kuśikas, the stead of Sudās; animate him, and let him loose to win riches for the Rāja; for the king (of gods) has slain Vṛtra in the East, in the west, in the North, therefore let Sudās worship him in the best regions of the earth."<sup>49</sup>

45. दश राजानः समिता अयज्यवः सुदासमिन्द्रावरुणा न युयुधुः ।।

सत्या नृणामद्यसदामुपस्तुतिर्देवा एषामभवन्देवहूतिषु ।। Rv. VII-83-7

46. दाशराज्ञे परियत्ताय विश्वतः सुदास इन्द्रावरुणावशिक्षतम् ।

श्वित्यज्जो यत्र नमसा कपर्दिनो धिया धीवन्तो असपन्त तृत्सवः । Rv. VII-83-8

47. H.D. Velankar, *Rgveda Maṇḍala VII*, Bhāratiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1963, Introduction, p-xx

48. Ibid.

49. Rv. III-53-11



"What do the cattle for you among the Kikatas; they yield no milk to mix with the Soma, they need not the vessel for the libation; bring them to us; bring also the wealth of the son of the usurer, and give us, Maghavan, the possessions of the low branches of the community."<sup>50</sup>

About the identity of the Tṛtsus, who were fought on behalf of Sudās, under the guidance of their leader Vasiṣṭha won victory for the former. Scholars put different opinions on the same. C.V. Vaidya<sup>51</sup> remarked "These hymns from the Vasiṣṭha *Maṇḍala* show that the Vasiṣṭhas are full of memory of this battle wherein the Bharatas or Tṛtsus, Vasiṣṭha's clan-men with their king Sudās obtained a decisive victory on the Paruṣṇī (Rāvi) by the help of the prayers of the Vasiṣṭhas the priest of Bharatas". H.D. Velankar<sup>52</sup> holds that "the Vasiṣṭhas were known as Tṛtsus before the advent of the great Vasiṣṭha or in other words, Tṛtsus was the earlier name of the family of the Vasiṣṭhas." He further declares that "The Tṛtsus were family-priests of the Bharatas before the *Dāśarājña* war and that Vasiṣṭha who was the most prominent among them gave his name to them thereafter."

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50. कि ते कृण्वन्ति कीकटेषु गावो नाशिरं दुहे न तपन्ति घर्मम् ।

आ नो भर प्रमगन्दस्य वेदो नैचाशाखं मघवन्नधया नः ।। *Rv.* III-53-14

51. C.V. Vaidya, *History of Sanskrit Literature*, Poona, 1929, p-113

52. H.D. Velankar, *Rgveda Maṇḍala VII*, Intro, pp-XXVII, XXIX

## 2. Ṛgvedic Tribes

### Pañca-Janās

The word *Pañca-janāḥ* generally means five peoples. But, technically the term *Pañca-janāḥ* in *Ṛgveda* refers to the varieties of people as *Pañca-kṛṣṭayaḥ* and *Pañca-carṣṇīḥ*,<sup>1</sup> both suggesting the tilling masses. ( $\sqrt{kṛṣ}$  - to till). Aupamanyava, an earlier teacher than Yāska, states that it denotes the four *Varṇas*, and in addition to this, the *Niṣādas* as the fifth caste.<sup>2</sup> But this interpretation appears to be not sound. Because, the four castes have certainly been mentioned clearly but only once in the tenth *Maṇḍala* of the *Ṛgveda* (X-90).<sup>3</sup> Which ofcourse is said by western scholars, to be a later origin. Yāska thinks that the *Pañca-janāḥ* are the Gandharvas, Pitṛs, Devas, Asurās and Rākṣasas.<sup>4</sup> A passage from the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* says that *Aditis Pañca-janāḥ*; and another passage therefrom conveys that it means the Devās, Manuṣyas, Gandhrvas-Apsarases, Sarpas and the Manes.<sup>5</sup> The Gandharvas and the Apsarases are taken as one category.

The *Ṛgveda* indicates that the five tribes were Aryans, as Agni is closely associated with them.<sup>6</sup> According to the *Śatapatha*

1. पञ्चजनाः। - *Rv.* III-37-9; 59-8; VIII-32-22; IX-65-23; X-45-6

पञ्चकृष्टयः। - *Rv.* II-2-10; III-53-16; IV-38-10; X-60-4; 119-6

पञ्चचर्षणयः। - *Rv.* V-86-2; VII-15-2; IX-101-9

2. पञ्चजना मम होत्रं जुषध्वम्।

चत्वारो वर्णा निषादः पञ्चमः इत्यौपमन्यवः॥ Yāska, *Nirukta*, III-8

3. ब्राह्मणोऽस्य मुखमासीत् बाहू राजन्यः कृतः।

ऊरू तदस्य यद्वैश्यः पद्भ्यां शूद्रो अजायत॥ *Rv.* X-90-12

4. गन्धर्वाः पितरो देवाः असुरा रक्षांसितेके॥ Yāska, *Nirukta*, III-8

5. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, III-31

6. ऊर्जाद उत यज्ञियासः पञ्च जना मम होत्रं जुषध्वम्॥ *Rv.* X-53-4

*Brāhmaṇa*, the *Pañca-janāḥ* is that which could not achieve the glory of Bharata.<sup>7</sup> In the same context, it suggests a difference between the Bharatas on the one hand, and the five or seven tribes on the other. Probably, this is on the back-ground of the *Dāśarājñā* war, wherein these were arrayed against Sudās-Bharatas. Generally, the Vedic texts suggest that the term *Pañca-janāḥ* indicates the Āryan tribes themselves; and they are Anu, Druhyu, Yadu, Turvaśa and Puru ; all these are mentioned in the *R̥gveda*, but not in association with term *Pañca-janāḥ*. In the *R̥gveda*, Yadu and Turvaśa are mentioned together.<sup>8</sup> Besides, the Matsyas and the Bhṛigus are also included in the same context; thus the groups of tribes during R̥gvedic age would be seven.<sup>9</sup>

The details regarding the R̥gvedic tribes may be as below :

#### Anu :

The tribe of Anus is referred to alongwith the Yadus, Druhyus, Turvaśas and the Purus, in the hymn addressed to Indra and Agni both.<sup>10</sup> Such references are found often in the *R̥gveda*.<sup>11</sup> They fought against the Sudās, but were defeated by the latter.<sup>12</sup> They hid themselves in the waters of Paruṣṇī or present Rāvi.<sup>13</sup>

7. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XIII-5-4-14

8. तुर्वशं यदुम् । *R̥v.* I-174-9 तुर्वशा यदू । IV-30-17

9. पुरोळा इत्तुर्वशा यक्षुरासीद्रायो मत्स्यासो निशिता अपीव ।

श्रुष्टिं चक्रुर्भगवो दुह्यवश्च सखा सखायमतरद्विषूचोः ।। *R̥v.* VII-18-6

10. यदिन्द्राग्नी यदुषु तुर्वशेषु यदुह्यवेष्वनुषु पूरुषस्थः ।

अतः परिवृषणावा हियातथा सोमस्य पिबतं सुतस्य ।। *R̥v.* I-108-8

11. *R̥v.* VII-18-14 ; VIII-10-5 etc.

12. नि गव्यवोऽनवो दुह्यवश्च षष्टिः शाता सुषुपुः षट् सहस्रा ।

षष्टिर्वीरासो अधि षड् दुवोयु विश्वेदिन्द्रस्य वीर्या कृतानि ।। *R̥v.* VII-18-14

13. सत्यमित्वा महेनदी परुष्यव देदिशम् ।

नेमापो अश्वदातरः शविष्ठादस्ति मर्त्यः । *R̥v.* VIII-74-15

### Druhyu :

The Druhyus are said to be one among the famous tribes of *Pañca-janaḥ*.<sup>14</sup> In the Sudās' victory, as the hymns from the *Rgveda* declare, the Druhyus are recorded to have been defeated by king Sudās, and perished in the water.<sup>15</sup> They are associated with the river Paruṣṇī.<sup>16</sup> They seem to be the inhabitants of the north-west India. The *Purāṇas*<sup>17</sup> also refer to Gandhāra dynasty as the descendents of Druhyus.

### Turvaśa :

The tribe Turvaśa is frequently mentioned in the *Rgveda*. They are closely described with their allies Yadu, Anus, Purus, and Druhyus.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the Turvaśas are generally mentioned with the Yadus, in the *Rgveda*.<sup>19</sup> Two passages of the *Rgveda*, refer to an attack by Turvaśa and Yadu on Divodāsa.<sup>20</sup> The Turvaśas people took part in the famous *Dāśarājña* war against the Sudās and defeated their allies. One *mantra* in the *Rgveda* refers to the defeat of the Turvaśa at the hands of the Śrñjayas.<sup>21</sup> The bank of Paruṣṇī is the home of the Turvaśas at the time of their conflict with the Sudās. They crossed the Paruṣṇī, but the direction of their crossing, is not mentioned.<sup>22</sup>

14. *Rv.* I-108-8

15. *Rv.* VII-18

16. दुराद्यो अदितिं स्वेवयन्तोऽचेतसो वि जग्रभ्रे परुष्णीम् । *Rv.*-VII-18-8

17. *Matsya Purāṇa*, 48-6; *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 99-9

18. *Rv.* I-108-8

19. *Rv.* I-36-18; 54-6; 174-9; VI-20-12; etc

20. य आनयत्परावतः सुनीती तुर्वशं यदुम् । *Rv.* VI-45-1

पुरः सद्य इत्थाधिये दिवोदासाय शम्बरम् । अधत्यं तुर्वशम् यदुम् । IX-61-2

21. यस्य गवापरुषा सूयवस्यू अन्तरुषु चरतो रेरिहाण ।

स सृज्जयाय तुर्वशं परादादवृचीवतो दैवताय शिक्षन् । *Rv.* VI-27-7

22. *Rv.* VII-18



### Yadu :

The term Yadu mentioned often in the *Rgveda*, denotes, the name of the king and his group of people. They are mentioned as coupled with Turvaśa. They fought against the Sudās with their allies Turvaśa, Anus, Purus and the Druhyus.<sup>24</sup> They were defeated by the Sudās.<sup>25</sup> The Yadu and the Turvaśa kings seem to have escaped, while the Anu and the Druhyu kings perished.

### Puru :

It signifies the name of a tribe and their king. The Purus are mentioned in the *Rgveda* with the Anus, Druhyus, Turvaśas and the Yadus.<sup>26</sup> They are referred to as the enemies of Sudās in the *Rgveda*.<sup>27</sup> As said in the *Rgveda*, due to Agni's favour, the Bharatas became celebrated as victorious over the Purus.<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, the victory of the Purus over the Dasyus is mentioned in the several *mantras* of the *Rgveda*.<sup>29</sup> Purukutsa and the Trasadsyu are the great kings of this tribe.<sup>30</sup> Probably the Kurus and Purus are found to be the two families connected with the *Rgvedic* time.<sup>31</sup> The Purus may be said as living on the bank of river Sarasvatī.<sup>32</sup>

23. तुर्वशं यदुम् । *Rv.* I-174-9 ; तुर्वशा यदू । *IV*-30-17

24. *Rv.* I-108-8

25. *Rv.* VII-18-14

26. *Rv.* I-108-8

27. *Rv.* VII-18

28. प्रप्रायमग्नीर्भरतस्य शृण्वे वि यत्सूर्यो न रोचते बृहद्भाः ।

अभि यः पुरुं पृतनासु तस्थौ द्युतानो दैव्यो अतिथिः शुशोच ।। *Rv.* VII-8-4

29. *Rgveda Maṇḍala*, I, IV, VI and VII

30. सनेम तेऽवसा नव्य इन्द्र प्र पूरवः स्तवन्त एना यज्ञैः ।

सप्ता यत्पुरः शर्म शारदीर्द्दन्दासीः पुरुकुत्साय शिक्षन् ।। *Rv.* VI-20-10

31. कुरुश्रवणमावृणि राजानां त्रासदस्यवम् । *Rv.* X-33-4

32. *Rv.* VII-96-1,2

सरस्वतीमिन्महया सुवृक्तिभिः स्तोमैर्वसिष्ट रोदसी ।

उभे यत्ते महिना शुभ्रे अन्धसी अधिक्षियन्ति पूरवः ।।

### Bharata :

The Bharatas form an important tribe, designating Aryan tribes during the period of the *Rgveda*. In the *Apri* hymns, occurs a goddess Bhāratī-the personified deity, the protective power of the Bharata tribe. Sudās was the ruler of the Bharatas. Viśvāmitra, his contemporary, was also a Bharata.<sup>34</sup> Vasiṣṭha, who was the leader of the Tṛtsus, also belonged to the Bharatas as their priest.<sup>35</sup> The Tṛtsus also seem to be a sub-tribe among the Bharatas. The Bharatas fought against the *Dāśarājñā* kings, under the leadership of Sudās, and Vasiṣṭha also was there with them in defeating *Dāśarājñā* by the favour of Indra. They are mentioned mostly in the third and the seventh *Maṇḍalas* as associated with Divodāsa also.<sup>37</sup> Bharatas had settled on the banks of the rivers Sarasvatī, Āpayā and Drṣadvatī,<sup>38</sup> which is called middle region of the famous Madhyadeśa. The Bharatas became very famous in the later literature. In the *Śathapatha Brāhmaṇa*,<sup>39</sup> the Bharata kings are recorded to have won victories over the Kāśi and made offerings over the rivers Gaṅgā and Yamunā. Macdonell and Keith writes -

- 
33. आ भारती भारतीभिः सजोषा इळा देवैर्मनुष्येभिरग्निः।  
सरस्वती सारस्वतेभिरवाक् तिस्रो देविर्बहिरेदं सदन्तु ।। *Rv.* III-4-8
34. विश्वामित्रस्य रक्षति ब्रह्मेदं भारतं जनम् । *Rv.* III-53-12  
विश्वामित्रो यदवहत्सुदासमप्रियायत कुशिकेभिरिन्द्रः ।। *Rv.* III-53-9  
III-53-24 ; III-33-11, 12 etc.
35. दण्डाद्वोद्वो अजनास आसन्परिच्छिन्ना भरता अर्भकासः।  
अभवच्च पुरेता वसिष्ठ आदिनृत्सूनां विशो अप्रथन्त ।। *Rv.* VI-33-6
36. *Rv.* III-53; VII-18 ; 33 and 83
37. त्वमीळे अथ द्विता भरतो वाजिभिः शुनम् । ईजे यज्ञेषु यज्ञियम् ।। *Rv.* VI-16-4  
त्वमिमा वार्या पुरू दिवोदासाय सुन्वते । भरद्वाजाय दाशुषे ।। *Rv.* VI-16-5
38. दूषद्वत्यां मानुष आपयायां सरस्वत्यां रेवदग्ने दीदीहि ।। *Rv.* III-23-4
39. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XIII-54-11-1

'moreover, in the formula of the kings proclamation for the people, the variants recorded include *Kuravaḥ*, *Pāñcālāḥ*, *Kuru-Pāñcālāḥ*, and *Bharatāḥ*;<sup>40</sup> the *Mahābhārata* consistently recognizes the royal family of the Kurus as a Bharata family. It is therefore extremely probable that Oldenberg is right in holding that the Bharatas in the times of the *Brāhmaṇas* were merging in the Kuru-Pāñcāla people.'<sup>41</sup> They ruled over a vast tract of this country on any account an important chapter in the social and political history of India for a long time. Perhaps, this is the cause that the name of our country came to be known a *Bharatavarṣa*.

#### Krivi :

In the *Rgveda*<sup>42</sup> the Krivis are said to have settled on the banks of the rivers Sindhu and Asiknī (Cenab). This Krivi tribe in the later literature was the former name of the Pāñcālās. The *Śathapatha Brāhmaṇa* says that - कृव्य इति ह पुरा पाञ्चालान् आचक्षते।<sup>43</sup> Here a king is referred to as *Kṛvya-Pāñcāla*. Macdonell and Keith, consider Krivi to be a variant of Kuru.<sup>44</sup> According to Zimmer,<sup>45</sup> the Krivis and the Kurus formed the later tribe known Vaikarnaṣ.

#### Vaikarnaṣ :

The Vaikarnaṣ are already mentioned in the *Rgveda*, as having fought against the king Sudās of the Bharata.<sup>46</sup> In this view, U.C.

40. The *Vājasaneyī Samhitā* in the Kaṇva recension XI-3-3;6,3 has, *Kuravaḥ*, *Pāñcālāḥ* evidently as a joint people; *Āpastambha*, XVIII-12-7 gives *Bharataḥ*, *Kuravaḥ*, *Pāñcālāḥ*, *Kuru-Pāñcālāḥ* and *Janatāḥ*, as alternatives, according to the people to whom the king belongs. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.II, p-96

41. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.II, p-96

42. याभिः सिन्धुमवथ याभिस्तूर्वथ याभिर्दशस्यथा क्रिविम्। *Rv.* VIII-20-24

43. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XIII-5-4-7

44. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.I, p.166

45. *Altindische Leben*, p-103

46. श्रवस्या वैकर्णयोर्जनान्राजा न्यस्तः। *Rv.* VII-18-11

Sharma concludes - 'Actually, the Bharatas, Kurus, Pāñcālās, Krivis etc., belonged to the same stock which in various divided groups, were referred to with different names in the different times.'<sup>47</sup>

#### Kuru :

The *Rgveda* mentions the name of Kuruśravaṇa. Kuruśravaṇa is mentioned as a prince with the epithet Trāsadasya, <sup>48</sup> i.e. the descendent of Trasadasyu. But Trasadasyu is well known as a Puru king. <sup>44</sup> The Purus and the Bharatas are spoken of as kindling fire on the Dṛṣadvatī, the Āpayā and the Sarasvatī. <sup>50</sup> The *Atharvaveda* <sup>51</sup> mentions Parikṣit as a king of the Kurus, and praises him. In the *Śathapatha Brāhmaṇa* <sup>52</sup> Kuru-Pāñcālās are said to be inhabitants of the Madhyadeśa.

#### Tṛtsu :

The Tṛtsus are referred to in the *Rgveda* in several places. <sup>53</sup> They were one of the most important tribes connected with the *Dāśarājñā* war. They helped king Sudās in his battle with the *Dāśarājñā*. <sup>54</sup> The *Rgveda* speaks of the alliance of the Tṛtsus with the Bharatas under the leadership of Vasiṣṭha, the priest of the Tṛtsus. <sup>55</sup> It is difficult to determine the relationship between the Tṛtsus and the Bharatas. But they seem to be actually the priests of

47. U.C. Sharma. *The Viśvāmitras and the Vasiṣṭhas*, p.284

48. कुरुश्रवणमावृणि राजानं त्रासदस्यवम् । मंहिष्टं वाघतामृषिः ।। *Rv.* X-33-4

49. उतो हि वां दात्रा सन्ति पूर्वा या पुरुभ्यस्त्रासदस्युर्नितोऽश । *Rv.* IV-38-1

50. दृषद्वत्यां मानुष आपयायां सरस्वत्यां रेवदग्ने दीदीहि ।। *Rv.* III-23-4

इळामग्ने पुरुदंसं सन्ति गोः शश्वत्तमं हवमानाय साध । *Rv.* III-23-5

51. *Atharvaveda*, XX-127-7

52. *Śathapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XIII-5-4

53. *Rv.* VII-18-7, 13, 15, 19; VII-33-5, 6; VII-83-4, 6, 8 etc.

54. *Rv.* VII-18-6, 7

55. अभवच्च पुराता वसिष्ठ आदितृत्सूनां विशो अप्रथन्त ।। *Rv.* VII-33-6

the Bharatas and can be identified with the Vasiṣṭhas. Moreover, they could not be supposed to be a tribe distinctly apart from the Bharatas. At one place in the *Rgveda*, the Tṛtsus are described as having braided hair on the right side of the head.<sup>56</sup> In another *mantra*, they seem to represent the Vasiṣṭhas.<sup>57</sup> Hence the identity of the two tribes can be inferred.

### Matsya :

The tribe called Matsya is mentioned in the *Rgveda* as the people who fought against Sudās in the *Dāśarājñā* war.<sup>58</sup> Later Vedic texts mention this tribe many times. The *Śathapatha Brāhmaṇa*<sup>59</sup> refers to a king of the Matsyas named Dhvaṣan Dvaitavana as he ruled near the lake of Dvaitavana. The *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad*<sup>60</sup> mentions the Matsyas with the Vaśas, and the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*<sup>61</sup> with the Śalvas. According to the *Manusmṛti*,<sup>62</sup> it is said that the Matsyas lived in the Madhyadeśa which comes between Himalaya and Vindhya mountain, and it had its extension upto the bank of Sarasvatī, which is now disappeared. The Matsyas stayed in the vicinity of the Kurukṣetra, the Pāñcālās and the Śūrasenas. This Madhyadeśa now includes the places of modern Alwar, Bharatpur and Jaipur.

56. श्वित्यञ्चो मा दक्षिणतस्कपर्दा धियंजिन्वासो अभि हि प्रमन्तुः। *Rv.* VII-33-1 compare with

57. श्वित्यञ्चो यत्र नमसा कपर्दिनो धिया धीवन्तो असपन्त तृत्सवः॥ *Rv.* VII-83-8

58. *Rv.* VII -18-6

59. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XIII-5-4,9

60. *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad*, IV-1

61. *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*, I-2-9

62. कुरुक्षेत्रञ्च मत्स्याश्च पाञ्चालाः शूरसेनकाः ।  
एष ब्रह्मर्षिदेशो वै ब्रह्मावर्तदिनंतरः॥ *Manusmṛti*, II-19  
कुरुक्षेत्रांश्च मत्स्यांश्च पाञ्चालात् शूरसेनजाम् ।  
दीर्घालिघूंश्चैव नरानग्रानिकेषु योजयेत् ॥ *Ibid*, VII-193

### Srñjaya :

The *Rgveda* faintly refers to the tribe Sñjaya. Their king Daivavāta is said to have defeted the Vṛcivanta and Turvaśa king.<sup>63</sup> Thus both Sudās of Bharatas and the Sñjayas were enemies of Turvaśa.<sup>64</sup> Again, the *Rgveda*<sup>65</sup> celebrates Divodāsa and a Sñjaya prince together. Both the references point alliance between the Tṛtsus and Sñjayas. But the Sñjayas and the Bharatas got assimilated, as both are mentioned in the same 'Dānastutis'.<sup>66</sup> In the later period, as *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*<sup>67</sup> declares, there was friendly relation between Sñjayas and Kurus. It said that Devabhāga Śrautarṣa was the priest of both the Kurus and the Sñjayas. The geographical position of the Sñjayas is uncertain. They may have stayed with their allies, the Tṛtsus in the Madhyadeśa.

### Pārāvata :

Pārāvata occurs in several *mantras* of the *Rgveda*. A *mantra*<sup>68</sup> invokes Sarasvatī and reads the epithet- *Pārāvataḥ* for her. The varied forms and other specialties of the Pārāvatas are referred in the *Rgveda*.<sup>69</sup> The *Rgveda*,<sup>70</sup> again makes a mention of the fine

63. *Rv.* VI-27-7

64. *Rv.* VII-18-6

65. प्रस्तोक इव राधसस्त इन्द्र दश कोशयीर्दश वाजिनोऽदात् ।  
दिवोदासादतिथिग्वस्य राधः शाम्बरं वसु प्रत्यग्रभीष्म ॥ *Rv.* VI-47-22  
मही राधो विश्वजन्यं दधानान्भरद्वाजान्त्सार्जयो अभ्ययष्ट ॥ VI-47-25

66. *Rv.* VI-47-23, 25

67. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, II-4-4-5

68. इयं शुष्मेभिर्बिसखाइवारुजत्सानु गिरीणां तविषेभिरूर्मिभिः ।  
पारावताग्नीमवसे सुवृक्तिभिः सरस्वतीमा विवासेम धीतिभिः ॥ *Rv.* VI-61-2

69. अथा पारावता इति चित्रारूपाणि दर्श्या । *Rv.* V-52-11

70. पारावतस्य रातिषु द्रवच्छ्रेष्ठाशुषु । तिष्ठ वनस्य मध्य आ ॥ *Rv.* VIII-34-18  
पारावतं यत्पुरुसंभृतं वस्वपावृणोः शरभाय ऋषिबन्धवे ॥ *Rv.* VIII-100-6

steads and great riches of the people. The *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*<sup>71</sup> mentions the Pārāvatas as staying on the bank of Sarasvatī river. The Pārāvatas, as is clear from the epithet of Sarasvatī were most probably associated with the region on the upper courses of the river Sarasvatī.

### **Bharadvāja :**

Bharadvāja is the seer of the sixth *maṇḍala* of the *Ṛgveda*. The *Ṛgveda*<sup>72</sup> mentions Bṛbu Bṛṣaya and Pārāvata with Bharadvāja. *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*<sup>73</sup> records Bharadvāja to have gained largest from Prastoka Sṛñjaya and thus points out a connection between the Bharadvājas and the Sṛñjayas. Later works, *Mahābhārata*<sup>74</sup> and *Purāṇas*<sup>75</sup> mentioned the Bharadvājas are a tribe.

### **Uśinara :**

The *Ṛgveda* indirectly mentioned Uśinara people. It refers to their queen-Uśinarāṇī.<sup>76</sup> In the *Ṛgveda*, one *mantra* of a hymn of credited seer Śibi Auśinara.<sup>77</sup> Later Vedic texts, the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*<sup>78</sup> regards both Vaśas and the Uśinaras as northerners. The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*<sup>79</sup> places the people in the middle region. In

71. *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*, IX-4-11

72. इयमददाद्रभसमृणच्युतं दिवोदासं ब्रध्नश्वाय दाशुषे ।

या शश्वन्तमाचखादवसं पणिं ता ते दात्राणि तविषा सरस्वति । *Rv.* VI-61-1; VI-61-2, 3 etc.

73. *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*, XVI-11-11

74. *Mahābhārata*, *Bhīṣmaparva*, IX-68

75. *Matsya Purāṇa*, 114-43; *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 45-119 etc.

76. समिन्द्रेय गामनङ्गाहं य आवहदुशीनराण्या अनः । *Rv.* X-59-10

77. *Rv.* X-179-1

78. शवसोशीनरेषु उदीच्येषु । *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*, II-9

79. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VIII-14

Indian literature, the Uśīnaras are said to have associated with the Śibis and the capital town of the Śibipura. It is identified with the modern town of Shorkot in the Jhang district.

#### **Cedi :**

The *Rgveda* mentions Cedi tribe.<sup>80</sup> Their king Kaśu Caidya was celebrated with the unparalleled generosity of the Cedis as found in the *Dānastuti*. They are referred later to in the epic period with the Matsyas ; and they lived in Bandela Khanda.

#### **Ruśama :**

The *Rgveda* mentions this tribe with their generous king Ṛṇamcaya.<sup>81</sup> Ruśama is mentioned in the *Rgveda* thrice as a protégé of Indra.<sup>82</sup> The *Atharvaveda* mentions them with their king Kaurama.<sup>83</sup>

#### **Varaśikha :**

It is the name of a leader of a tribe. This tribe is recorded to have been defeated by Abhyāvartin Chāyamāna, in the *Rgveda*.<sup>84</sup> Abhyāvartin Chāyamāna has been referred to as Pārthava or the king Pṛthu.

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80. यथाचिच्चैद्यः कश्युः शतमुष्टानां ददत् सहस्रा दश गोनाम् । *Rv.* VIII-5-37

माकिरेना पथा गाध्येनेमे यन्ति चेदयः । अन्यो नेत्सूरिरोहते भूरिदावत्तरो जनः ।। *Rv.* VIII-5-39

81. *Rv.* V-30-12, 15

82. शग्धि यथा रुशमं श्यावकं कृपमिन्द्र प्रावः स्वर्णरम् । *Rv.* VIII-3-12

यद्वा रुमे रुशमे श्यावके कृप इन्द्र मादयसे सचा । *Rv.* VIII-4-2

तिरश्चिदर्ये रुशमे परीरवि तुभ्येत्सो अज्यते रयिः । *Rv.* VIII-51-9

83. *Atharvaveda*, XX-127-1

84. *Rv.* VI-27-4, 5



### Ajas :

In the *Rgveda*, the Ajas are mentioned with the Yakṣus and the Śigrus.<sup>85</sup> They fought against king Sudās on the bank of river Yamunā under the leadership of Bheda. Ajas were defeted by the Tṛtsus in the war of *Dāśarājñā*. Pāṇini<sup>86</sup> mentions Ajada as a people. Aja is the ordinary name for goat in Sanskrit. Therefore, Ajas were probably shepherd people in the *Rgvedic* time.

### Śigru :

The Śigrus<sup>87</sup> were a tribe in the *Rgvedic* time. They fought against the Sudās accompanied by the Ajas, the Yakṣus, and the Bhedas. The Śigrus were defeated by the Tṛtsus who fought under the leadership of Sudās in *Dāśarājñā* battle.

### Yakṣu :

Yakṣu is mentioned in the *Rgveda*, both in singular and plural forms. They are described as taking in the *Dāśarājñā* battle. The Yakṣus<sup>88</sup> having friendship with the Ajas, the Śigrus, and under the leadership of the Bheda fought against the Sudās. The Yakṣus may be taken to be a variant of Yakṣa. The *Amarakośa*<sup>89</sup> speaks of Yakṣa as a branch of Devas. Probably Yakṣus may be Aryan tribe.

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85. आवदिन्द्रं यमुना तत्सवश्च पात्रे भेदं सर्वताता मुषायत् ।

अजासश्च शिग्रवो यक्षवश्च बलिं शीर्षाणि जभुरश्व्यानि ।। *Rv.* VII-18-19

86. Pāṇini, IV-1-171

87. *Rv.* VII-18-19

88. *Rv.* VII-18-19

89. विद्याधरोऽप्सरोयक्षरक्षो गन्धर्व किन्नराः ।

पिशाचो गुह्यकः सद्भोभूतोऽमी देवयोनयः ।। *Amarakośa*, I-1-10

Ed: Lewis Rice, University of Mysore, 1989, p-5

**Bheda :**

It is the name of a tribe and their king also.<sup>90</sup> They were enemies of king Sudās. Bheda was defeated by Sudās on the river Yamunā.

**Kīkaṭa :**

The name of Kīkaṭa people occurs only in one *mantra* of the *Rgveda*.<sup>91</sup> They appear as hostile to the singer and as under the leadership of *Pramagandha*. Yāska<sup>92</sup> declares Kīkaṭa to be the name of a non-Aryan country. Vedic Index<sup>93</sup> says that Kīkaṭa is given as a synonym of Magadha. Sudama Misra<sup>94</sup> comments that the Kīkaṭas were primarily associated with the territories of Magadha and later on coalesced with them.

**Vaikarṇa :**

Vaikarṇa is mentioned only once in the description of the *Dāśarājñā*.<sup>95</sup> It is stated here that Sudās overthrew the twenty one tribes of the two Vaikarṇas. Nothing particular is known about the Vaikarṇas.

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90. *Rv.* VII-18-18, 19; 33-3; 83-4

91. किं ते कृणवन्ति कीकटेषु गावो नाशिरं दुहे न तपन्ति घर्मम्।

आ नो भर प्रमगन्दस्य वेदो नेचाशाखं मघवन्नन्धया नः॥ *Rv.* III-53-14

92. किं ते कुर्वन्ति कीकटेषु गावः। कीकटा नाम देशोऽनार्यनिवासः। कीकटाः किंकृताः।

किं क्रियाभिरिति प्रेप्सा वा। Yaska, *Nirukta*, VI-32

93. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.I, p-159

94. Sudhama Misra, *Janapada State in Ancient India*, p-36

95. एकं च यो विंशति च श्रवस्य वैकर्णयोर्जनान्राजा न्यस्तः। *Rv.* VII-18-11

### Mūjavan :

The *Rgveda*<sup>96</sup> says that Soma is described as Maujavata i.e coming from the Mūjavantas. Yāska<sup>97</sup> says that Mūjavanta as the name of a mountain. The Mūjavants were the residents of the region surrounding the Mūjavān mountain. The Rgvedic people used to obtain the Soma plant regularly from this mountain. It is probable that the people were living in the northern region at the foot of the Himālayan mountain.

### Paktha :

The *Rgveda* says the Paktha as the one of the tribes. They fought against the Tṛtsu-Bharatas in the *Dāśarājñā* battle. The Pakthas and their allies were defeated by the king Sudās on the river Paruṣṇī.<sup>98</sup> The Pakthas also fought against the Puru king Trasadasyu.<sup>99</sup> Sudama Mishra's opinion is the Pakthas seem to be the fore fathers of the modern Pakhtoons in the eastern parts of Afghanistan.<sup>100</sup>

### Bhalānas :

Bhalānas is also one of five tribes the Pakthas, Bhalānas, Alinas, Viṣānins and Śivas.<sup>101</sup> They fought against the Sudās on the battle of *Dāśarājñā*, but were defeated by Sudās.

96. प्रावेपा मा बृहतो मादयन्ति प्रवातेजा इरिणे वर्वतानाः।

सोमस्येव मैजवतस्य भक्षो विभीदको जागृविर्मह्यमच्छन्। *Rv.* X-34-1

97. मौजवतो मूजवतस्य जातः। मूजवांन्पर्वतो मुज्जवान्। मुज्जोविमुच्यत इषीकया।। Yāska, *Nirukta*, IX-8

98. आ पक्थासो भलानसो भनन्तालिनसो विषाणिनः शिवासः।

आ योऽनयत्सधमा आर्यस्य गव्या तृत्सुभ्यो अजगन्मुघा नृन्।। *Rv.* VII-18-7 *Rv.* VII-18-7

99. यथा कण्वे मघवन्नसदस्यवि यथा पक्थे दशव्रजे। *Rv.* VIII-49-10

100. Sudama Mishra, *Janapada State in Ancient India*, p.40

101. *Rv.* VII-18-7

**Alina :**

The Alinas are also mentioned in the *Rgveda* with their allies. The Alinas were enemies of king Sudās, in the battle of ten kings and suffered defeat.<sup>102</sup>

**Śiva :**

In the company of the Alinas, Pakthas, Bhalānas and Viṣānins,<sup>103</sup> the Śivas also fought against Sudās in the battle of *Dāśarājñā*. They were defeated by the Ṛtsu-Bharata. Dr. Agarwal puts the view that their original association seem to be with modern Baluchistan and they may be identified with the Greek *Siboi*.<sup>104</sup>

**Viṣanin :**

The Viṣanin occurs once in the *Rgveda*, as one of the enemies of the Ṛtsu-Bharatas.<sup>105</sup> This tribe may be supposed as belonging to the north-west of Paruṣṇī. The *Vedic Index*<sup>106</sup> expresses-“the word seems to mean ‘having horns,’ but in what sense is unknown ; perhaps their helmets were horn-shaped or ornamented with horns.”

**Vṛcīvanta :**

The Vṛcīvanta is referred to as being conquered by the Sṛñjaya king Daivavāta who also routed, the Turvaśa king.<sup>107</sup> The people may be regarded as the fore-fathers of modern Buluchis.

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102. Ibid.

103. Ibid.

104. Dr. V.S. Agarwala, *India as Known to Pāṇini*, Lucknow University, 1953, p.53

105. *Rv.* VII-18-7

106. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol. II p.313

107. स सृज्जयाय तुर्वशं परादाद्वचीवतो दैववताय शिक्षन् ।। *Rv.* VI-27-7

### Parsu :

This tribe is mentioned with the Pr̥thu in the *R̥gveda*.<sup>108</sup> Pāṇini also mentions about the Paraśus.<sup>109</sup> It is Probable that the Paraśus were associated with the north-eastern sector of Iran.

### Pr̥thu :

In the *R̥gveda* the Pr̥thus are mentioned with the Paraśus.<sup>110</sup> Again, the *R̥gveda* mentions the descendents of the Pr̥thu, the Pārthavas as generous donors.<sup>111</sup> It is most probable that the Pr̥thus were the fore-fathers of the Pārthins.

### Gandhāri :

In the *R̥gveda*, the good wool of the sheep of Gandhāris is referred to.<sup>112</sup> The *Atharvaveda* mentions with the Mūjavants, Aṅgas, and the Magadhas.<sup>113</sup> This group of people lived in the north-west of India. Sudhama Mishra concluded that the tribe most probably was associated with the tracts between the Indus and Kābul rivers, as the same later on became the territory of the Gandhāra Janapada.<sup>114</sup>

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108. युवां नरा पश्यमानास आप्यं प्राचा गव्यन्तः पृथुपर्शवो ययुः। *R̥v.* VII-83-1

109. Pāṇini, V-3-117

110. युवां नरा पश्यमानास आप्यं प्राचा गव्यन्तः पृथुपर्शवो ययुः। *R̥v.* VII-83-1

111. द्वयौ अग्ने रथिनो विंशतीं गा वधूमतो मघवा मह्यं सम्राट्।

भ्यावर्तीचायमानो ददति दूणाशेयं दक्षिणा पार्थवानाम्।। *R̥v.* VI-27-8

112. सर्वाहमस्मी रोमशा गन्धारीणामिवामिका। *R̥v.* I-126-7

113. *Atharvaveda*, V-22-14

114. Sudama Mishra, *Janapada State in Ancient India*, p-40

### 3. The Ṛgveda and the Purāṇas as Sources of Traditional History

The most important thing about which agreement between Ṛgvedic and Purāṇic traditions is supposed to be lacking, is the course of Aryan expansion in India. The hymns of the *Ṛgveda*, belong to the earliest period of Aryan history, plainly indicate that the Aryans were settled during that period in the territory of *Sapta-Sindhu*, later known as the Punjab. The seers of the Ṛgvedic hymns show their familiarity with the smallest rivers of the *Sapta-Sindhu* region and north-west frontier, such as the Kubhā, the Krumu, the Gomati, the Sarayū, the Suvāstu, and several others. In the later Vedic literature and the Purāṇic literature, the horizon is clearly wider, and kingdoms of the Gaṇgetic valley and northern part of the Deccan are well known. The Vedic literature thus clearly indicates that the movement of Aryans took place from the north-west of India to the east and the south.

There is a difference of opinion among scholars as to the comparative value of the Vedic texts and the Purāṇas in regard to the historical data supplied by them. Macdonell says-“History is the one of weak spots in Indian literature. It is, in fact, non-existent. The total lack of the historical sense is so characteristic, that the whole course of Sanskrit literature is darkened by the shadow of this defect, suffering as it does from an entire absence of exact chronology.”<sup>1</sup>

Keith is excessively sceptical about the historical value of the *Purāṇas* and is doubtful regarding the historicity of any event which

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1. Macdonell, *Sanskrit Literature*, p-10

is not explicit in the *Ṛgveda*. He says - "that the Vedic texts, the *Samhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas* are not books of historical purpose, nor do they deal with history."<sup>2</sup>

Pargiter<sup>3</sup> on the other hand, gives more weight to the Purāṇic tradition than to the Vedic evidence, which he styles as the tradition of the *Brāhmaṇas* (priests) who possessed no historical sense. The so-called Kṣatriyas' tradition, however, is hardly an unpolluted source of history. The evidence of the *Purāṇas*, on the other hand, cannot be ruled out altogether, because despite a good deal of what is untrustworthy in them, they alone contain something like a continuous historical narrative, and it is absurd to suppose that the elaborate royal genealogies were all merely figments of imagination or a tissue of falsehood.

R.C. Majumdar examines this theory and says "the theory which pronounces the *Purāṇas* as respecting Kṣatriya tradition as distinct from, and superior to, the *Brāhmaṇa* tradition contained in the Vedic texts, does not appear to be correct. The theory is mainly based on two assumptions:

1) that the heroes of the legends and stories in the *Purāṇas* are Kṣatriya kings who mostly do not figure in the Vedic literature, and

2) the transmission of their history was entrusted to *Sūta* of Kṣatriya origin. There is hardly any foundation for these beliefs. The *Sūta* was not a non-*Brāhmaṇa* but a venerable sage. As regards the so-called Kṣatriya traditions, there have never been in India

2. Keith, *JRAS*, 1914, pp-739, 1031 note

3. F.E. Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, Motilal Banarasidas, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi-7. Fully explained in Introduction chapter.

two such water-tight compartments as the Brāhmaṇa tradition and the Kṣatriya traditions. Even in the works distinctly assigned to Kṣatriya tradition by Pargiter, we find the glorification of the Brāhmaṇas and so-called Brāhmaṇic literature abounding in Kṣatriya legends. The *Purāṇas* themselves assign a comparatively small portion to genealogical accounts, the genuine Kṣatriya tradition according to Pargiter; their main bulk deals with Vedic and Brāhmaṇic lore. Moreover, the *Purāṇas* follow the Vedic religion and take pride in styling themselves as the “*fifth Veda*.”<sup>4</sup>

Moreover, it may be observed that there is no irreconcilable contradiction or conflict between the Vedic texts and the *Purāṇas*. The *Ṛgveda* which deals the Kuru-Pāñcāla product is naturally historical; therefore the kings belonging to those clans play prominent roles in it, and other kings, who are mentioned in the Vedic texts, are not found in the Purāṇic traditions. There is also the possibility of the same person being referred to under different names in the two sets of traditional accounts. Some of the kings mentioned in the *Ṛgveda* can be fitted in the gaps in the Purāṇic lists. The *Ṛgveda*, no doubt, offers the proper corrective to the Purāṇic lists. It is legitimate to take their testimony as valid even in matters on which the *Ṛgveda* is silent. The proper procedure for the writing of traditional history is to take into account the joint testimony of the Vedic and Purāṇic texts wherever available, and to try to bring harmony into apparently conflicting texts. The evidence of the *Purāṇas* in these matters needs very careful consideration.

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4. R.C. Mujumdar, *The Vedic Age*, Geoge Allen and Unwin Ltd, London, 1951, p-305



A critical examination of the Purāṇic texts and Vedic literature reveals the fact that the Purāṇic genealogies in some cases refer to the same persons figuring in the Vedic literature. The Purāṇic data about some of the royal dynasties, kings, and the Brāhmaṇa families find confirmation in Vedic literature. There is no basis for the view that there are hardly any points of contact between the Vedic and Purāṇic tradition. Here, we shall briefly refer to the important persons who appear in both Vedic literature and *Purāṇas*.

Let us take the older records preserved in the *Purāṇas* and the *Mahābhārata* regarding the location and the movement of various dynasties.

#### **The Saudyumna Dynasty :**

The *Mahābhārata* more than once locates the famous king of this dynasty, Yayāti, on the river Sarasvatī.<sup>5</sup> Yayāti's son Puru and his descendents are regarded by all the *Purāṇas* to have ruled in the same region where Yayāti ruled, because it is distinctly said that Yayāti installed Purus as his successor in the ancestral sovereignty.<sup>6</sup> That is to say, if Yayāti ruled on the banks of Sarasvatī, the Purus must also have ruled on the banks of the

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5. सरस्वती पुण्यतमा नदीनां तथा समुद्राः सरितः साद्रयश्च ।  
 ईजनाय पुण्यतमाया राज्ञे घृतं पयो दुदुहुर्नाहुषाय ॥ *Mahābhārata*, VII-63-4  
 तत्र यज्ञे ययातेश्च महाराज सरस्वती ।  
 सर्पि पयश्च सुत्राव नाहुषस्य महात्मनः ॥ *Mahābhārata*, IX-42-33  
 compare with  
 एका चेतत् सरस्वती नदीनां शुचिर्यती गिरिभ्यः आसमुद्रात् ।  
 रायश्चेततन्ति भुवनस्य भूरेघृतं पयो दुदुहे नाहुषाय । *Rv.* VII-95-2
6. अभिशिष्य ततः पुरुं स्वराज्ये सुतमात्मनः । *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 93-88

same river. This is again corroborated by the *Mahābhārata*, which speaks of the Puru kings. Matināra is spoken of as having held a sacrificial session of twelve years on the bank of Sarasvatī.<sup>7</sup> It does not require much imagination to realise that he must not have held that long sacrificial session outside his kingdom, and that his kingdom therefore must have been situated on the banks of the Sarasvatī. All this is fully in accordance with the *R̥gveda* where Yayāti and his descendents, the Purus, are located on the banks of the Sarasvatī.<sup>8</sup>

The king Yayāti had five sons, viz. Puru, Anu, Druhyu, Yadu, and Turvaśu.<sup>9</sup> However, these names occur in the *R̥gveda* as those of ancient tribes.<sup>10</sup> According to the *Purāṇas*,<sup>11</sup> they have obtained territories in the neighbourhood of the ancestral kingdom. It is remarkable that the sons, except Turvaśu, are placed in the north or west of the ancestral kingdom. As the ancestral kingdom was situated on the banks of the Sarasvatī, the north-western region naturally covered the land of the five rivers. Thus, Anu is said to have got the north, Druhyu is the west, and Yadu is the South-West. Various facts preserved in the *R̥gveda*, the *Purāṇas* and the *Mahābhārata*, confirm the location of the Anus, Druhyus and the Yadus, respectively which later came to be called Punjab.

7. *Mahābhārata*, I-63-26 : I-95-26

8. उभे यत्ते महिना शुभ्रे अन्धसी अधिक्षियन्ती पूरवः। *R̥v.* VII-96-2

9. यदिन्द्राग्नि यदुषु तुर्वशेषु यदुह्युष्वनुषु पुरुषस्थः। *R̥v.* I-108-8

10. ऊर्जाद उत यज्ञियासः पञ्चजना मम होत्रं जुषद्वम्॥ *R̥v.* X-53-4

11. अभिषिच्य ततः पुरुं स्वराज्ये सुतात्मनः।

दिशी दक्षिणपूर्वस्यां तुर्वशुं तु न्यवेशयत्॥

दक्षिणापरतो राजा यदुं ज्येष्ठं न्यवेशयत्।

प्रतीचामुत्तरस्यां द्रुह्युचानुं च तावुभौ॥ *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 93-88,90

Thus, taking the Yadus first, the *Rgveda* mentions their raid on the river Sarayū,<sup>12</sup> which was affluent to the Gomati, a western tributary of the Indus. The *Mahābhārata* says that the Yādava princess Lopāmudrā married Agastya at a great place which is called 'Agstya-tīrta' on the bank of the river Sindhu.<sup>13</sup> These statements clearly imply that the Yādavas lived somewhere on the western confines of the land of the five rivers. As for the Druhyus, the fact that according to the Purāṇas one of them gave his name to the country of Gāndhāra,<sup>14</sup> makes it easy to understand that they ruled in the north-west part of land of the five rivers. The Anus are rightly placed to the north of the Paurava territory. According to the *Rgveda*, the Anus dwelt on the banks of the Paruṣṇī. The fact that Indra is said to have given away the possession of the Anu king, to the Tṛtsus in the battle of Paruṣṇī.<sup>15</sup> It shows that the Anus dwelt on the bank of the Paruṣṇī. Similarly, the king Śrutarvan is said to have sacrificed in the fire of the Ānavas and given gifts on the banks of Parusni.<sup>16</sup> Turvaśu is said to have got the south-east part. Turvaśu and his descendants may have originally ruled on the banks of the river Dṛṣadvatī, which flows to the south-east of Sarasvatī. They thus must have been close neighbours of the Paurava. Later they might have migrated westward. Because in many of the Rgvedic hymns, belonging to the period of the Tṛtsu kings, the Turvaśas are closely associated with

12. उत त्या तुर्वशायदू अस्नातार शचीपतिः।

उत त्या सद्य आर्या सरयोरिन्द्र पारतः। अर्णाचित्ररथावधीः। *Rv.* IV-30-17, 18

13. *Mahābhārata*, III-130

14. *Brahma Purāṇa*, 13, 148-53

15. *Rv.* VII-18-13

16. सबाधो यं जना इमेऽग्निं हव्येभिरिळते। जुह्वानासो यतस्तुचः। *Rv.* VIII-74-6

सत्यमित्वा महेनदी परूष्णव देदिशम्। नेमपो अश्वदातारः शविष्ठादस्ति मर्त्यः। *Rv.* VIII-74-15

the Yadus, and also because during that the period the region near the Dr̥ṣadvatī was occupied by the Tṛtsus.<sup>17</sup> Thus, the Saudyumna dynasties ruled in the land of the Sindhu and the Sarasvatī according to Purāṇic evidence, which is again in agreement with Vedic literature.

### The Aikṣvāku Dynasty :

It is nothing directly said in the Purāṇas and the epics about the place where the early kings of this dynasty ruled. The greatest conqueror among the early Aikṣvāku kings was Māndhātā. He is said to have made wide conquests. Yet he is never associated with any river on region to the east of Yamunā, while in the North-west his conquests extended as far as Gāndhāra.<sup>18</sup> Indeed the fact that he performed the sacrifice on the bank of the Yamunā shows that it was the limit of his conquests. This proves that the Aikṣvākus ruled somewhere in the country west of the Yamunā.

The *Ṛgveda* clearly associates the Aikṣvāku king Trasadasyu with the region to the west of Sindhu. He is said to have conferred gifts to the seer Sobhari on the bank of the river Suvāstu.<sup>19</sup> The conquest of Gāndhāra by Māndhātā and the granting of gifts by Trasadasyu on the bank of Suvāstu, make it certain that the early Aikṣvākus ruled in a territory situated on the western side of the Sindhu.

17. P.L. Bhargava, *India in the Vedic Age*, p.157

18. एषा सा यमुना राजन्महर्षिगण सेवित ।

अत्र राजा महेश्वासो मान्धाताऽयजत स्वयम् ।। *Mahābhārata*, III-125-25,26

तेन सोमकुलोत्पन्नो गान्धाराधिपतिर्महान् ।

गर्जन्निव महामेघः पमथ्यः निहितः शरैः । *Mahābhārata*, III-126-43

19. अदन्मे पौरुकुत्स्यः पञ्चाशतं त्रसदस्युर्वधूनाम् ।। *Ṛv.* VIII-19-36

उत मे प्रयीयोर्वयियोः सुवास्त्वा अधि तुग्वनि । *Ṛv.* VIII-19-37

### The Prāṁśava Dynasty :

Nothing definite is said in the *Purāṇas* and the *Mahābhārata*, about the location of this dynasty. But whatever is said about it, proves that it also ruled in the country watered by the Sindhu and its tributaries.

### The Śaryāti Dynasty :

The territory headed by the kings of Śaryāti dynasty is indicated in a fairly precise manner by the *Mahābhārata*. It is well known that king Śaryāti met the Ṛṣi Cyavana in his own territory and gave his daughter in marriage to him. It is said in the *Mahābhārata* that Cyavana had his hermitage on the bank of a river called Vadhūsarā.<sup>20</sup> According to a time-honoured local tradition, the river Vadhūsarā is identical with the modern Duhān, flowing near Nārnaul in Haryana.<sup>21</sup> The fact that Cyavana married the daughter of Śaryāti and his near descendant Apnavāna married the daughter of the Sudyumna king Nahuṣa,<sup>22</sup> proves that the location of the Śaryāta kingdom in the neighbourhood of the Sudyumna kingdom.

### Agreement of Ṛgvedic and Purāṇic Genealogy :

The important names referred to in the *Purāṇas* are often found in the *Ṛgveda* and other texts of Vedic literature. It shows that the historical accounts of Vedic source have been further amplified in the *Purāṇic* texts.

20. नाम तस्यास्तदा नद्याश्चक्रे लोकपितामहः।

वधूसरेति भगवांश्चवनस्याश्रमं प्रति ।। *Mahābhārata*, I-6-8

21. P.L. Bhargava, *India in the Vedic Age*, p-159

22. *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 65-81; *Brahma Purāṇa*, III-1-9

The *Purāṇas* trace all genealogies back to Vaivasvata Manu. Manu had ten children of whom two are particularly, important : the son Ikṣvāku and the daughter Iḷā.<sup>23</sup> Ikṣvāku, was the eldest one, and hence his race became famous by his name. Thus, became the foremost in the *Sūryavamśa* or the solar race. However, Ikṣvāku can be considered as historical figure. Iḷā still belongs to the twilight zone. According to one version,<sup>24</sup> Iḷā was born as a man but become a woman because of a curse. Iḷā married Budha (mercury), son of Candra (moon), and got a son Parūravas who thus is known to be of the *Candravamśa* or the lunar race.

There is a clue of uncertain chronological significance. Vedic texts as well as the *Purāṇas* tell the story of Pṛthu, son of Veṇa<sup>25</sup> He is said to have persuaded the earth to yield edible plants and fruits. Consequently, the earth was named *Pṛthvi* after him. The legend obviously commemorates the transition of the Āryans from hunting and food gathering to food growing. It is not possible to date this epoch because Pṛthu Vainya, though mentioned in the *Rgveda*,<sup>26</sup> is a semi-mythical figure. It is however clear from the Purāṇic references that this Pṛthu does not belong to any post-Manu Vaivasvata king list but is placed in an unspecified earlier period.<sup>27</sup>

Some other details are available about Manu Vaivasvata, say that he was the half-brother of the twins Yama and Yamī. Yama is

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23. *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 85; *Brahma Purāṇa*, III-60; *Mahābhārata*, I-75, etc.

24. पुरुषत्वं हतं सर्वं स्त्रीरूपे विस्मितो नृप ।

इलेति साभवन्नारी पिनोन्नत घनस्तनी ।। *Matsya Purāṇa*, IX-48

25 *Vāyu Purāṇa*, I-33-36; 62, 103; *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, II-36, 103 etc.

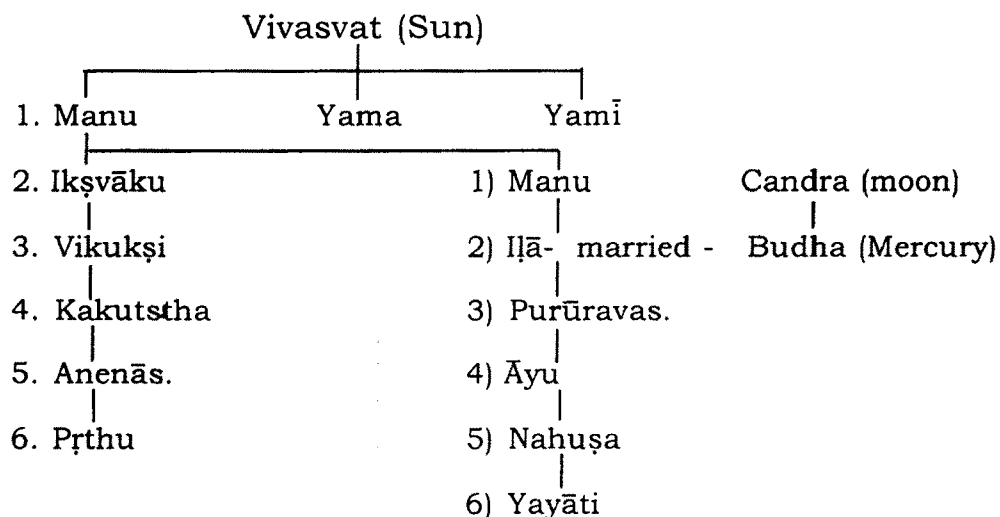
26. पृथी यद्वा वैन्यः सादनेष्वेदतो अश्विना चेतयेथाम् । *Rv.* VIII-9-10

27. Rajesh Kochar, *Vedic People*, p-39

the king of the deceased. He has a place in the Avestā as Yima, son of Vivahavant. Therein, he is said to be a founder of civilization, who on instructions from Ahura Mazda makes his creatures prosperous. However, Manu may be a mythical character, meant to bestow divinity on the ruling dynasties. Ambiguity about Ilā's gender and the pretension of divine paternity of her son point towards the same direction.<sup>28</sup> The *R̥gveda* refers to Purūravas as Aila, descendent of Ilā.<sup>29</sup>

It is reasonable to suppose that the original historical tradition was purely down to earth. The integration of some historical dynasties into a single network under divine auspices came later, when these dynasties became famous. Out of the ten sons of Manu, only four, viz Sudyumna, Ikṣvāku, Prāṁsu and Śaryāti, were kings or founders of royal dynasties. Thus, it is said that the descendents of Manu's son Dhṛṣṭa occupied Bhālīka (Bhalkh) and Nariṣyantra's offsprings were the Śakas.<sup>30</sup>

#### Geneological network in the Purāṇas



28. *Ibid.*

29. इति त्वा देवा इम आहुँरेळ यथेमेतद्भवसी मृत्युबन्धुः। *R̥v.* X-95-18

30. Rajesh Kochar, *Vedic People, (Their History and Geography)*, Orient Longman Ltd, New Delhi, 1997 p-31.

It is here proper to know about the origin of the various branches of the lunar line because of their purāṇic importance.

#### The Sudyumnas :

The dynasty of Sudyumnas may first be considered. His successor Purūravas was a son of Budha<sup>31</sup> Budha was a son of Soma and Ilā, daughter of Manu.

The Purāṇas have identified Soma and Budha with the Moon and Mercury respectively and there by led all subsequent writers to dub this dynasty as the 'lunar race' (*Candra-Vamśa*).

Soma and Budha are mentioned in the *Purāṇas* as the son and grandson of the Atri Ṛṣi.<sup>32</sup> It is wrong to render those names as moon and Mercury. The Ṛṣi Budha, is well known in the Vedic literature. He is mentioned in the ancient *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*<sup>33</sup> and also in the *Anukramaṇī*s as the author of the Ṛgvedic hymn X-101 and part author of hymn V-1.

The *Purāṇas* unanimously regard Purūravas as the son of the Ātreya Ṛṣi Budha and Ilā. The Purāṇic evidence is supported by the Vedic literature. Thus, the *Ṛgveda*<sup>34</sup> and *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*<sup>35</sup> call him Aila. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*<sup>36</sup> Ilā is mentioned as a daughter of Manu. Both in the *Purāṇas* and the Vedic literature even distant descendants of Purūravas are called

31. *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 85,22-23; *Vishṇu Purāṇa*, IV-1-16; *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, IX-1-42, etc.

32. *Matsya Purāṇa*, 198, 1; *Vāyu Purāṇa* -90; *Brahma Purāṇa*, III-65. etc.

33. *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*, XXIV-18-6

34. इति त्वा देवा इम आहुरैळ यथेमेतद्भवसी मृत्युबन्धुः। *Rv.* X-95-18

35. ऊर्वशी हाप्सराः पुरुरवसं ऐलं चकामे। *Śatapata Brāhmaṇa*, XI-5-5-1

36. *Śatapata Brāhmaṇa*, I-8-1 (Story is mentioned)



Ātreya. *Matsya Purāṇa*<sup>37</sup> introducing the family of Viśvāmitra, a descendant of Purūravas, calls it another branch of Atri family. Puru another descendant of Purūravas, who is the seer of two Ṛgvedic hymns (V-16; 17) is called Ātreya by the *Anukramaṇīs*.<sup>38</sup>

The Purūravas and his descendants are regarded in the Vedic literature as well as in the *Purāṇas* as the lineal successor of Manu's son Sudyumna. Purūravas descendants Āyu,<sup>39</sup> Nahuṣa,<sup>40</sup> and Yayāti<sup>41</sup> are all mentioned in the *Ṛgveda*. Nahuṣa and Yayāti can be seen as joint composers of hymn IX-101 of the *Ṛgveda*. In the *Anukramaṇīs*, Nahuṣa is called Mānava.<sup>42</sup>

Sudyumnas fourth successor Yayāti had five sons named Yadu, Turvaśu, Druhyu, Anu, and Paru.<sup>43</sup> These five are the founders of the dynasties and clans named after them. Yadu's descendents are known as Yādavas, with the Haihayas as a branch.<sup>44</sup>

Yādava king Śaśabindu is mentioned in the *Maitrāyaṇī Upaniṣad*.<sup>45</sup> His descendant Vītahavya is mentioned in the *Ṛgveda*,<sup>46</sup> the *Atharvaveda*<sup>47</sup> and *Anukramaṇīs*.<sup>48</sup> The Satvants are

37. *Matsya Purāṇa*, 198-1

38. *Ṛv.* V-16 and 17

39. त्वमस्मै कुत्समतिथिग्वमायुं महे राज्ञे यूने अरन्धनाय । *Ṛv.* I-53-10  
I-31-11; II-14-7, etc.

40. त्वमग्ने प्रथममायुमायवे देवा अकृणवन्नहुषस्य विशस्पतिम् । *Ṛv.* I-31-11

41. ययातेर्ये नहुषस्य बर्हिषि देवा आसते ते अधि ब्रुवन्तु नः ॥ *Ṛv.* X-63-1  
I-31-17 ; VII-95-2, etc.

42. शावाश्विर्ययातिर्नाहुषो नहुषो मानवो मनुः संवरण इति । *Anukramaṇīs*, IX-101

43. *Ṛv.* I-108-8

44. *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 94 ; *Brahmaṇḍa Purāṇa*, III-69 ; 47, etc.

45. *Maitrāyaṇī Upaniṣad*, 1-4

46. त्वं धृष्णो धृषता वीतहव्यं प्रावोविश्वभिरुतिभिः सुदासम् । *Ṛv.* VII-19-3

47. *Atharvaveda*, VI-137-1, His descendants are clearly referred to as Vaitahavyas in V-19-1

48. इमं ष्वोकोना वीतहव्य ऋषिः । As an author of *Ṛv.* VI-15

mentioned in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*,<sup>49</sup> and a famous prince of this clan Babhru is mentioned in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*<sup>50</sup> and the name of his father Devāvṛdha suggested by his patronymic Daivāvṛdha.

The most famous prince of this clan, Kṛṣṇa, is probably identical with Kṛṣṇa Devakīputra mentioned in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, as suggested by Dr. Raychaudhari.<sup>51</sup> Among the Vaidarbhās Bhīma is mentioned in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*,<sup>52</sup> and the name Vidarbha suggested by his patronymic Vaidarbha. The Caidyas are known even to the *Ṛgveda* which mentions a king of this dynasty named Kaśu.<sup>53</sup>

#### The Turvaśus :

Turvaśus race is briefly described in the *Purāṇas*.<sup>54</sup> The seventh king Marutta, is said to have been childless and adopted Duśyanta, the Paurava. According to the *Ṛgveda*, Turvaśu kings were ruling till the time of Sudās, and a Turvaśu king was included among the ten kings who fought against Sudās.<sup>55</sup>

#### The Druhyus :

Druhyus race is briefly given by the *Purāṇas*.<sup>56</sup> A twenty-first descendent of Druhyu is the king Gāndhāra after whom the district

49. काशीनां भरतः सत्वतामिवेति । *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XIII-5-4-21

50. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, 35-8

51. तद्वैतद्धोर आङ्गीरसः कृष्णाय देवकीपुत्रायोक्तो । *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, III-17

Q. Dr. Raychaudari, *Early History of the Vaiṣṇava Sect*, Lecture-I, Calcutta, 1920.

52. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, 35-8

53. यथाचिच्चैद्यः कशुः । *Ṛv.* VIII-5-37

54. *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 1-6; *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, III-74, 1-6; *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, IV-16 etc.

55. *Ṛv.* VII-18

56. *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 99, 11-12; *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, III-74, 11-12; *Matsya Purāṇa* 48-49 etc.

and town are named. Gāndhāra's descendents are said to have spread out into the mleccha (impure) countries to the north and settled there.

### The Ānavas :

The Anus descendents were known as the Ānavas; in which Kekayas are included as a branch. The name of king Uśīnara of this race, is suggested in the *Ṛgveda* by a mention of his wife Uśīnarāṇī.<sup>57</sup> Śivi is mentioned in the *Anukramaṇīs*<sup>58</sup> and *Baudhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*.<sup>59</sup> The name of his father Uśīnara is suggested by his patronymic Auśīnara. Among branches of Ānavas, the Kekayas are mentioned in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*,<sup>60</sup> and *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*.<sup>61</sup> The Madras are mentioned in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, and an Ambaṣṭha king is mentioned in the same text.<sup>62</sup> Madras and Ambaṣṭhas are branches of the Anus.

### The Pauravas :

From the *Ṛgvedic* as well as *Purāṇic* point of view, the most important dynasty is Puru's. Among Paurava kings Bharata is mentioned in the *Ṛgveda*.<sup>63</sup> The name of his father Duṣyanta is suggested by his patronymic Dauṣyanti occurring in the *Śatapatha* and *Aitareya Brāhmaṇas*.<sup>64</sup> Bharata had no heir because it is said

57. समिन्द्रेय गामनङ्गाहं य आवदुशीनरण्या अनः। *Rv.* X-59-10

58. उत्तिष्ठतैकर्वा शिबिरौशीनरः। As an author of *Rv.* X-179-1

59. *Baudhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*, XXI-18

60. अश्वपतिर्वाऽअयं कैकेयः। *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, X-6-1-2

61. *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, V-11-4

62. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, 39-7

63. तमीळे अध द्विता भरतो वाजिभिः शुनम्। *Rv.* VI-16-4

64. तेन हैतेन भरतो दौषन्तिरीजे । *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XIII-5-4, 11-12

*Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, 39-9

that his wives killed their sons, as he was disappointed in them. He, therefore, adopted a Ṛṣi, called Vitatha, son of Bṛhaspati. He is called the family of Bhāradvāja.

An account of this adoption is supported by this *Vedārtha-Dīpika* which assigns five sons (i.e descendants) named Suhotra, Śunahotra, Nara, Garga and Ṛjīśvan to Bhāradvāja.<sup>65</sup> It says that they could claim optionally to be descendants of Bṛhaspati or of Bharata. Vitatha is corrupted form of Vidathin, for Ṛjīśvan. It is clearly shown in the *Ṛgveda* as Vaidathina.<sup>66</sup> The *Bṛhaddevatā* also mentions Vidathin as the name of Bhāradvāja.<sup>67</sup> He is also probably called Vidatha in another hymn of the *Ṛgveda*.<sup>68</sup>

The fourth descendant of Vitatha is called Bṛhat. Bṛhat was succeeded by his son Ajamīḍha, who is mentioned in the *Ṛgveda*.<sup>69</sup> After Ajamīḍha this race divided into two important branches. Which continued in the name of his sons Ṛkṣa and Suhotra referred to in the *Ṛgveda*.<sup>70</sup> Suhotra is mentioned in the *Anukramaṇīs*<sup>71</sup> as also his grandson of Ajamīḍha who is called Sauhotra.<sup>72</sup> Parikṣit and Pratīpa are mentioned in the *Atharvaveda*.<sup>73</sup> Śantanu is

65. *Vedārtha Dīpika* on *Ṛv.* VI-52

66. त्वं पिप्रं मृगयं शूशुवांसमृजिष्वने वैदथिनाय रन्धीः। *Ṛv.* IV-16-13

67. योऽङ्गरेभ्य ऋषिर्जज्ञे तस्य पुत्रो बृहस्पतिः।

बृहस्पतेर्भारद्वाजो विदथीति य उच्यते।। *Bṛhaddevatā*, V-102

68. उत त्वे मा मारुताश्वस्य शोणाः क्रत्वामघासो विदथस्य रातौ।। *Ṛv.* V-33-9

69. नरो यद्वामश्विना स्तोममावन्त्सधस्तुतिमाजमीळ्हासो अगमन्। *Ṛv.* IV-44-6

70. ऋज्राविन्द्रोत आ ददे हरी ऋक्षस्य सूनवि। *Ṛv.* VIII-68-15

71. अभुरेकः सुहोत्रस्तु चतुर्थी शक्वरी। अपूर्व्या। *Anukramaṇīs* as author of *Ṛv.* VI-31 and 32

72. क उ श्रवत्सप्त पुरुमीळ्हाजमीळ्हा सौहोत्रौ त्वाश्विनं हि तं वाम्। *Anukramaṇīs* as author of *Ṛv.* IV-43 and 44

73. *Atharvaveda*, VIII-68-15; XX-127, 7-10

mentioned in the *Ṛgveda*.<sup>74</sup> The last king of the Paurava race before the Bhārata war was Dhṛtarāṣṭra, son of Vicitravīrya. Dhṛtarāṣṭra is mentioned in the *Kāthaka Samhitā*,<sup>75</sup> and the name of his father Vicitravīrya is suggested by his patronymic Vaicitravīrya.

### The Jāhnavas:

One of the important branches of the Paurava-Bharatas was the Jāhnavya dynasty of Kanyākubja. Many of the Kanyākubja kings are referred to in the Vedic literature.

The name Jahnu occurs in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* and *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*.<sup>76</sup> Kuśika is mentioned in the *Ṛgveda*,<sup>77</sup> *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*<sup>78</sup> and in the *Anukramaṇīs*.<sup>79</sup> Gāthin is also mentioned in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*<sup>80</sup> and in the *Anukramaṇīs*.<sup>81</sup> Viśvāmitra is ofcourse a well-known Ṛgvedic figure. The whole of the third *Maṇḍala* of the *Ṛgveda* is attributed to him and his sons and grandsons. In the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*<sup>82</sup> he is called *rājaputra* and in the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa* he is called a Jāhnavya and a king.<sup>83</sup>

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74. आदित्यैर्वा यद्वसुभिर्मरुत्वान्त्स पर्जन्यं शंतनवे वृषाय *Rv.* X-98-1

75. *Kāthaka Samhitā*, X-6

76. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, 33-6

*Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*, XXI-12

77. गीर्भि रण्वं कुशिकासो हवामहे। *Rv.* III-26-1

78. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, 33-6

79. शासत्कुशिको विश्वामित्र एव वा श्रुतेः। *Anukramaṇīs* as author of *Rv.* III-31

80. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, 33-6

81. अग्निं होतारं गाथी ह। *Anukramaṇīs* as author of *Rv.* III-19 to 22

82. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, 33-5

83. *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*, XXI-12

### The Kāśyas :

Another important branch of the Bharatas was the dynasty of Kāśi. Divodāsa is mentioned in the *Kāṭhaka Samhitā*.<sup>84</sup> His father Bhīma is suggested by his patronymic Bhaimaseni. His son Pratardana is mentioned in the same *Samhitā*,<sup>85</sup> as well as the *Anukramaṇīs* which call him Kāśīrājā at one place and Daivodāsi, son of Divodāsa at another place.<sup>86</sup>

### The Tṛtsus :

After the king Ajamīdha, the Bharatas divided into two great branches. In the main race the king who succeeded Ajamīdha was Ṛkṣa. According to *Purāṇas*, the another branch established a new kingdom by Ajamīdhas son Nīla.<sup>87</sup> The name is not given to this dynasty in the *Purāṇas*. However, in the *Ṛgveda* this dynasty is called as Tṛtsu dynasty.<sup>88</sup>

Tṛtsu mentioned in the Ṛgvedic hymns.<sup>89</sup> He is variously called Ṛkṣa and Pṛthu in the *Purāṇas*. The next king of this race, Bhṛmyaśva is suggested by the patronymic of Mudgalā who is called Bhārmyaśva in the *Anukramaṇīs*.<sup>90</sup> Mudgala and his wife Indrasenā are well known in the Ṛgvedic hymns.<sup>91</sup> Mudgala's son

84. *Kāṭhaka Samhitā*, VII-1-8

85. *Kāṭhaka Samhitā*, XXI-10

86. काशीरजो प्रतर्दनो रोषदश्वो वसुमना आध्यानुष्टुप् । *Anukramaṇīs* as author of *Ṛv.* X-179- 2  
प्र सेनानि चतुर्विंशति दैवदासीः प्रतर्दनः । IX-96

87. *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 99, 194-210 ; *Matsya Purāṇa*, 50, 1-16; *Harivaṃśa Purāṇa* 32, 63-80, etc.

88. *Ṛv.* VII-18;33;83

89. व्यानवस्य तृत्सवे गयं भाम्जेष्मं पूरुं विदथे मृध्वाचम् । *Ṛv.* VII-18-13

90. प्र ते मुद्रलो भार्म्यश्वो दुग्णेन ऋषभेण । *Anukramaṇīs* as author of *Ṛv.* X-102

91. ते न सूभर्वं शतवत्सहस्रं गवां मुद्रलः प्रधने जिगाय । *Ṛv.* X-102-5

Vadhryaśva<sup>92</sup> and grandson Divodāsa<sup>93</sup> are mentioned in the *R̥gveda Samhitā*. The name of Pijavana is suggested in the patronymic of Sudās.<sup>94</sup> Sudās is as famous R̥gvedic king. Sudās' grandson Somaka is also mentioned in the *R̥gveda*,<sup>95</sup> and *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*.<sup>96</sup> His father's name Sahadeva is suggested by calling him Somaka *Sāhadevya*.

### The Pāñcāla Dynasties :

The word Pāñcāla, implies that they were an aggregate of five families. According to Purāṇas, the Tṛtsu king Bhṛmyaśva had five sons, they are : Mudgala, Sṛnjaya, Bṛhadiṣu, Yavīnara, and Kṛmilāśva.<sup>97</sup> They were called the Pāñcālas. But this is wrong interpretation of the later editors.<sup>98</sup> The fact that the *Mahābhārata* indicates that one of the Pāñcāla families was named Somaka.<sup>99</sup> It shows that the Pāñcālas could not have come into existence till the time of Somaka, who was descendant of Mudgala. This, therefore, means that the descendant of these five princes, sometime after the time of Somaka, formed themselves into a group called Pāñcālas.

The epic indicates another family constituting the Pāñcālas, that is Sṛnjaya family. The Sṛnjaya was Bhṛmyaśva's second son. Many of his descendants such as Prastoka<sup>100</sup> and Sahadeva<sup>101</sup>

92. भद्रा अग्नेर्वध्र्यश्वस्य संदुशो वामी प्रणीतिः सुरणा उपेतयः। *Rv.* X-69-1

93. याभिर्महामतिधिग्वं कशोजुवं दिवोदासं शम्बरहत्य आवतम्। *Rv.* I-112-14

94. सुदासं दत्ता वसु बिभ्रता रथे पृक्षो वहतमश्विना। *Rv.* I-47-6

95. बोधध्यन्मा हरिभ्यां कुमारः साहदेव्यः। *Rv.* IV-15-7

96. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, 35-8

97. *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 99-194-211; *Matsya Purāṇa*, 50, 1-16 etc

98. P.L. Bhargava, *India In the Vedic Age*, pp-136-137

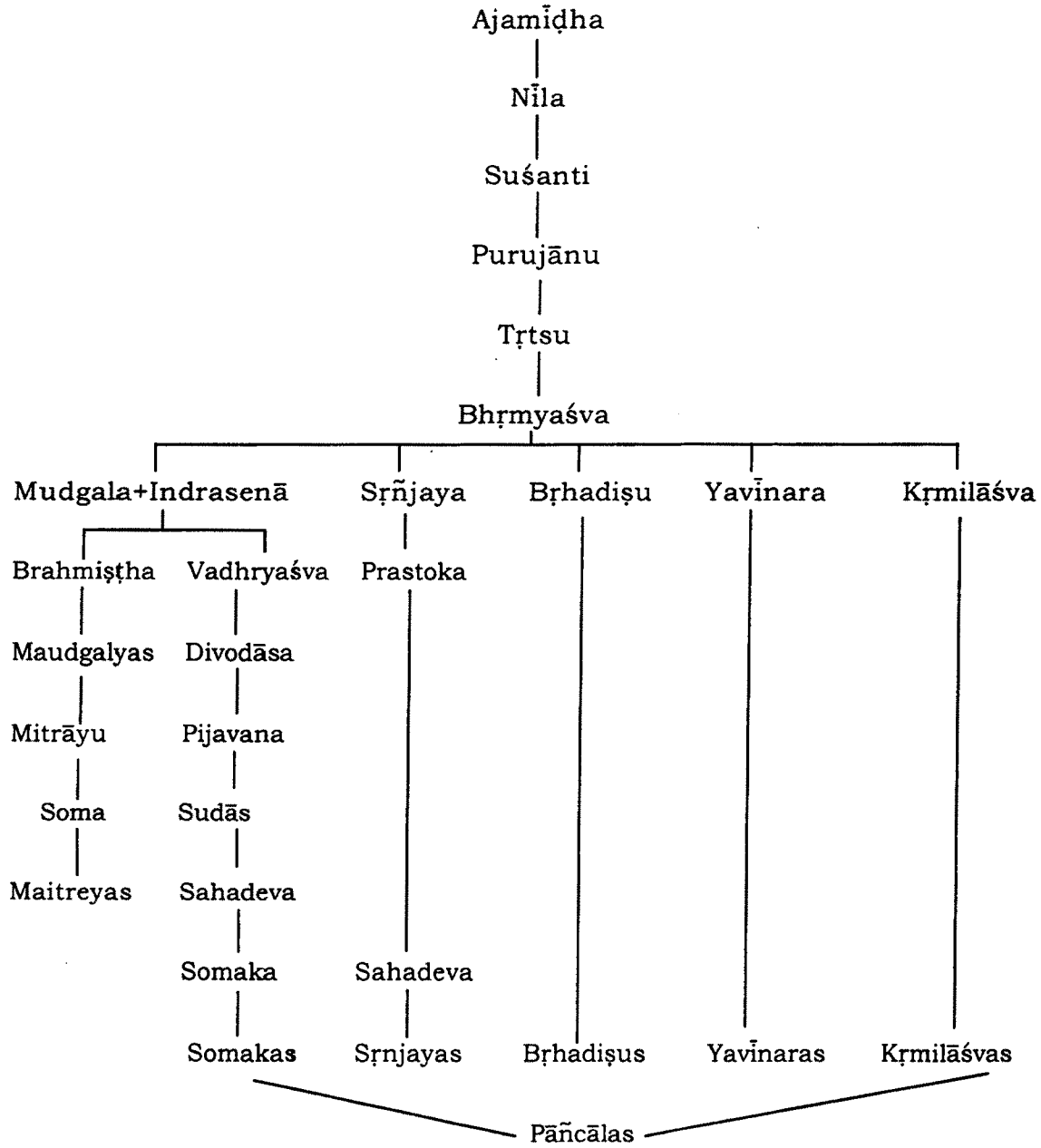
99. *Mahābhārata*, I-185,31; 193-1 *Dr̥ṣṭadyumna*, the Pāñcāla Prince is called the best of Somakas, So drupada is called Saumaki-*Mahābhārata*, I-131

100. प्रस्तोक इन्द्र राधसस्त इन्द्र दश कोशयीर्दश वाजिनोऽदात्। *Rv.* VI-47-22

101. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, 35-8

are mentioned in the Vedic literature. Thus, the origin of Pāñcālas, as given in the Purāṇas, finds Vedic corroboration. These Pāñcāls settled in the country, called Krivi.<sup>102</sup> This is subsequently assumed the name, Pāñcāla.

### The Tṛtsus and Pāñcālas:



102. त्रिवयाऽ इति ह वै पुरा पाञ्चालानाचक्षते । *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XIII-5-4-7



### The Aikṣvākus :

The dynasty founded by Manu's son Ikṣvāku was called Aikṣvāku dynasty. This dynasty is also called in later texts, the solar dynasty. Manu is well known in the *Ṛgveda Samhita*,<sup>103</sup> as son of Vivasvat. Ikṣvāku is also found in the *Ṛgveda* and the *Atharvaveda*.<sup>104</sup>

The twenty-first king of this race is Māndhātṛ, who is mentioned in the *Ṛgveda*,<sup>105</sup> the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*,<sup>106</sup> and in the *Anukramaṇīs*.<sup>107</sup> His father's name Yavanāśva is suggested by his patronymic Yauvanāśva. Māndhātā's son and grand son are said to have been Purukutsa<sup>108</sup> and Trasadasyu<sup>109</sup> respectively. These two kings are undoubtedly identical with the same names in the *Ṛgveda*. According to Macdonell and Keith,<sup>110</sup> Rapson<sup>111</sup> and other scholars, the Ṛgvedic kings of these names belonged to the Pūru family. Consequently, F.E. Pargiter attempted to prove that the Ṛgvedic kings, Purukutsa and Trasadasyu, were different from the Aikṣvāku Purukutsa and Trasadasu of the *Purāṇas*. Against of this view, P.L.Bhargava,<sup>112</sup> proved that the Purāṇic Purukutsa and Trasadayu are identical with the king of the same names in the Vedic literature.

103. यथा मनौ विवस्वति सोमं शक्रापिबः सुतम् । *Ṛv.* VIII-52-1

104. यस्येक्ष्वाकुरूपं व्रते रेवान्मराय्येधते । *Ṛv.* X-60-4

105. याभिः सूर्यं परियाथः परावति मान्धातारं क्षेत्रपत्येष्वावतम् । *Ṛv.* I-112-13

106. *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*, I-2-10

107. प्रो षु सुदाः पैजवनः शक्वर । *Anukramaṇīs*, as author of *Ṛv.* X-134

108. त्वं ह त्यदिन्द्र सप्त युद्यन्तुरो वज्रिन्युरुकुत्साय दर्दः । *Ṛv.* I-63-7

109. उत त्वे मा पौरुकुत्सस्य सूरेस्त्रसदस्योर्हिरणिनो रराण । *Ṛv.* V-33-8

110. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.I, pp-541-542

111. Ed. Rapson, *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I, London, 1922, p-305

112. P.L. Bhargava, *India in the Vedic Age*, pp-143-144

Trasadasyu's successor was Sambhūta. His son Viṣṇuvṛdha. One branch descended from him became a Brāhmaṇa family and the other branch descended from his son Anāraṇya continued as the Aikṣvāku race.<sup>113</sup>

Anāraṇya is mentioned in the *Maitrāyaṇī Upaniṣad*.<sup>114</sup> Vasumanas in the *Anukramaṇīs*.<sup>115</sup> So also, Trayaruṇa in the *Rgveda*,<sup>116</sup> Hariścandra in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*,<sup>117</sup> Bhagīratha in the *Jaiminīya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa*.<sup>118</sup>

### The Prāṁśavas :

This dynasty was founded by Manu's son Prāṁśu. In this race Marutta is mentioned in the *Śatapatha* and *Aitareya Brāhmaṇas*.<sup>119</sup> The name of his father Avikṣita is suggested by his patronymic Āvikṣita.

### Śaryāti :

The most famous of the sons of Manu is Śaryāti. He is mentioned in the *Rgveda Samhita*,<sup>120</sup> and *Anukramaṇīs*.

Thus, the genealogical account preserved in the *Purāṇas*, agrees with the evidence supplied by the Vedic literature. But a question remains that how dependable is the genealogical

113. *Kūrma Purāṇa*, I, 20, 25-28; *Līṅga Purāṇa*, I-65.39-43

114. *Maitrāyaṇī Upaniṣad*, 1-4

115. वसुमना आद्यानुष्टुप् । *Anukramaṇīs*, as author of *Rv.* X-179-3

116. यो मे गिरस्तुविजातस्य पूर्विर्युक्तेनाभि त्र्यरुणो गृणाति । *Rv.* V-27-3

117. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, 33-1

118. *Jaiminīya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa*, IV-6-1,2

119. महाव्रतमतिरात्रस्तेन ह मरुतऽआविकषितऽईजऽआथोगवो राजा ।

*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XIII-5-4-6

*Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, 33-1

120. तद्विच्छर्यणावती । *Rv.* I-84-14; VIII-6-39; 7-29; 64-11; X-65-22 etc.

information provided by the *Purāṇas*? There is no way of checking the veracity of various kings listed in their entirety. But verily, fragmentary historical references are preserved in the *Ṛgveda*. At no place does the *Purāṇic* tradition run counter to the *Ṛgvedic* allusions. In fact, the *Purāṇas* help to place the *Ṛgvedic* references in their proper contexts, because very often in the *Ṛgveda* and other Vedic texts patronymics are used in place of names for reason. The *Ṛgveda* remembers Yayāti as an ancient sacrificer and refers to him as Nāhuṣya (son of Nahuṣa). The *Purāṇas* confirm that he is indeed an early king and son of Nahuṣa. Many kings, known from the *Purāṇas* to be early kings, figured in the *Ṛgveda*. Like, Ikṣvāku, Purūravas, Māndhātā etc.

Besides, some names of kings found in the *Purāṇas*, are not figured in *Ṛgveda*. viz. Hariścandra, Bhagīratha etc. Yet, Hariścandra appears in *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* and *Śāṅkhāyana Śrautasūtra*, Bhagīratha in the *Jaiminīya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa*. The *Purāṇas* thus, constitute a historical data bank consistent with the Vedic texts.

The *Purāṇas* do not seem to have been overwhelmed by citations in the *Ṛgveda*. Many celebrated kings in the *Ṛgveda* are not known to the *Purāṇas* - eg. Abhyavartin Cāyamāna, Śrutarvān Arkṣa and Svanaya Bhāvya. These were probably minor chieftains who had the good fortune of having acquired the services of the seers. Remarkably, no contemporaneous hymn exists in honour of the most celebrated kings.

More important than the names of the individual kings are the names of various clans that figure in the *Ṛgveda*. The Vedic texts by themselves cannot establish the inter-relationship between

them. For example, Vedic Index<sup>102</sup> can only suggest as probable that the Bharatas, in the times of the *Brāhmaṇas*, were merging with the Kuru-Pāñcāla people or tentatively mention the possibility of the Union of Bharatas and Purus with the Kurus. A student of the *Purāṇas* would consider these conclusions as self-evident. The Purus, Bharatas, Kurus and the so-called Pāñcālas are all related clans, which are known by different names at the different times to distinguish themselves from one another.

Reading these historical accounts found in the Vedic texts, it seems that above mentioned historical accounts has been customary for the writers of Indian history to confine themselves, so far as the political history of the period is concerned, to the few isolated facts gleaned from the Vedic texts. Pargiter has observed - "Ancient Indian history has been fashioned out of compositions, which are purely religious and priestly, which notoriously do not deal with history, and which totally lack the historical sense. The extra-ordinary nature of such history may be perceived, if it were suggested that European history should be constructed merely out of theological literature. What would raise a smile if applied to Europe has been soberly accepted when applied to India."<sup>122</sup> In response to this a convincing reply may be given in the words of R.C. Mujumdar - "The force of these remarks is undeniable and no student of Indian history should ignore the legendary element in the Puranas and epics. It is necessary to remember that, for reasons stated above, we cannot accept those traditions as genuine historical facts so long or so far as they are not corroborated by contemporary texts or other reasonable evidence. Until then we can treat them only a traditional history. But such traditional history has its value, and is in any case a necessary preliminary step for the discovery of genuine history."<sup>123</sup>

121. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.II, p-96.

122. Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Traditions*. *Intro*,

123. R.C. Mujumdar, *The Vedic Age*, p-311

IMPORTANT DYNASTIES OF THE RĠVEDIC PERIOD  
THE ERA OF SAPTASINDHU

Note: The Pauravas were famed as Bhāratas after the time of king Bharata.

Prāmśavas	Aikṣvākus	Yādavas	Haihayas	Druhyas	Ānavas	Pauravas	Turvaśas	
1 Manu*	Manu*	Manu*	Manu*	Manu*	Manu*	Manu*	Manu*	1
2 Prāmśu	Ikṣvāku*	Sudyumna	.....	Sudyumna	Sudyumna	Sudyumna	Sudyumna	2
3 .....	Vikuṣi	Purūravas*	.....	Purūravas*	Purūravas*	Purūravas*	Purūravas*	3
4 Prajāpati	Kakutstha	Āyu	.....	Āyu	Āyu	Āyu	Āyu	4
5 .....	Anenas	Nahūṣa*	.....	Nahūṣa*	Nahūṣa*	Nahūṣa*	Nahūṣa*	5
6 Khanitra	Pṛthu	Yayāti*	.....	Yayāti*	Yayāti*	Yayāti*	Yayāti*	6
7 .....	Viṣṭarāśva	Yadu	.....	Druhyu	Anu	Pūru*	Turvaśa	7
8 Kṣupa	Ārdra	Kroṣṭu	Sahasraja	.....	.....	Janamejaya	.....	8
9 .....	Yuvanāśva I	.....	.....	.....	.....	Pracinvant	.....	9
10 Vimśa	Śrāvasta	Vṛjinīvant	.....	.....	.....	Pravīra	Vahni	10
11 .....	Bṛhadaśva	.....	.....	.....	.....	Manasyu	.....	11
12 Vivimśa	Kuvalāśva*	.....	.....	Babru	Sabhānara	Abhayada	.....	12
13 .....	Dṛḍhāśva	.....	.....	.....	.....	Sudhanvan	Garbha	13
14 Khaninetra	Pramoda	Svāhi	.....	.....	.....	Bahugava	.....	14
15 .....	Haryaśva I	.....	.....	.....	.....	Samyāti	Gobhānu	15
16 Ativibhūti	Nikumbha	.....	.....	.....	.....	Ahamyāti	.....	16
17 Karandhama	Samhataśva	.....	.....	.....	.....	Raudrāśva	Trisānu	17
18 Avikṣit	Akṣāśva	Ruśadgu	.....	.....	.....	Rceyu	.....	18
19 Marutta*	Prasenaḥjit	.....	.....	.....	.....	Matināra	Karandhama	19
20 Nariṣyanta	Yuvanāśva II	Citraratha	.....	.....	.....	Tamsu	.....	20
21 Dama	Māndhātṛ*	Śaśabindu*	.....	.....	.....	Dharmanetra	Marutta	21
22 Rāṣṭra- vardhana	Durgaha	Pṛthuśravas	.....	.....	.....	Duṣyanta*	.....	22
23 Sudhṛti	Girikṣit	Antara	Dharma- netra	.....	.....	.....	.....	23
24 Nara	Purukutsa*	.....	.....	.....	.....	Bharata*	Varūtha	24
25 Kevala	Trasadasyu*	Suyajña	Kunti	.....	.....	Vidatha*	.....	25
26 Bandhumant	.....	Uśanas	.....	.....	Mahāśāla	Bhuvamanyu	Andira	26
27 Vegavant	Sambhūta	.....	.....	Dharma	.....	Bṛhatkṣatra	.....	27
						Suhotra*	.....	

IMPORTANT DYNASTIES OF THE RĠVEDIC PERIOD  
THE ERA OF CONQUEST

Note: The first kings of all the three Bhārata dynasties were sons of Suhotra, the last Paurava king of the previous era.

Aikṣvākus	Yādavas	Haihayas	Druhyus	Ānavas	Trtsus (Bhāratas)	Jahnu (Bhāratas)	Kāsis (Bhāratas)	
28 Viṣṇuvṛddha	Śineyu	Sāhañja	.....	.....	Bṛhat	Jahnu*	Kāsa	28
29 Anaraṇya	.....	.....	.....	Mahāmanas	Ajamīdha	Sunaha	Dirghatapasa	29
30 Trasadaśva	Marutta	.....	.....	.....	Nīla	Ajaka	Dhanvantari	30
31 Haryaśva II	.....	Mahiṣmant	Dhṛta	.....	Suśānti	Balākāśva	Ketumant I	31
32 Hasta	Kambalabarhis	.....	.....	.....	Puruṣānu	Kuśa	Bhīmasena	32
33 Rohidaśva	.....	Bhadraśreṇya*	.....	Uśinara*	Trtsu	Kuśāmba	Divodāsa	33
34 Vasumanas*	Rukmakavaca	Durdama	.....	Śivi*	Bhṛmyaśva	Isīratha	Pratardana*	34
35 Trivṛṣan	Parāvṛt	Kanaka	Durdama	.....	Mudgala*	Kuśika*	Vatsa	35
36 Tryaruna*	Jyāmagha	Kṛtavīrya	.....	.....	Vadhryaśva*	Gāthin*	Alarka*	36
37 Triśaṅku	Vidarbha*	Arjuna*	.....	Vṛṣadarbha	Divodāsa*	.....	.....	37
38 Hariścandra*	.....	Jayadhvajaja	.....	.....	Pijavana	Viśvāmitra*	Sannati	38
39 Rohita	Bhīma I*	Tālajaṅgha	Pracetasa	.....	Sudās*	.....	.....	39
40 Harita	.....	Vitahavya	Sucetas	.....	Sahadeva	.....	Sunītha	40
41 Caṅcu	.....	.....	.....	.....	Somaka*	.....	.....	41
42 Vijaya	Kunti	Ananta	.....	.....	.....	.....	Kṣema	42
43 Ruruka	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	43
44 Vṛka	Dhṛṣṭa	Durjaya	.....	.....	.....	.....	Ketumant II	44
45 Bāhu	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	45
46 Sagara*	Nirvṛti	Supratīka	.....	.....	.....	.....	Suketu	46
47 (Asamañjas)	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	47
48 Amśumant	Vidūratha	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	Dharmaketu	48
49 Dilipa	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	49

#### 4. Royal Kings

##### Divodāsa :

Divodāsa is one of the earliest heroes of the Ṛgvedic age. The *Ṛgveda* states that he was a son of Vadhryaśva.<sup>1</sup> He was probably grand- father of king Sudās, the famous hero of the Ṛgvedic period, who fought against the *Dāśarājña* kings. The king Sudās is clearly associated with the Tṛtsus and the Bharatas, and probably Pijavana was the son of Divodāsa. The name of Pijavana is suggested in the patronymic of Sudās.<sup>2</sup> The name of Pijavana is mentioned in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*<sup>3</sup> and *Anukramaṇīs*<sup>4</sup> also. Thus, Divodāsa was naturally earliest king of Bharatas.

Divodāsa's great enemy was Śambara, the Dasyu chief, holding the hundred forts.<sup>5</sup> The *Ṛgveda* mentions he repeatedly defeated his great enemy, Śambara, the chief of the Dasyus.<sup>6</sup>

The two *mantras* of the *Ṛgveda* suggest that Turvaśa and Yadu attacked Divodāsa.<sup>7</sup> The Turvaśa were the allies of the Vṛcivants, who were said to have been defeated on the bank of Hriyūpiyā.<sup>8</sup> Which is identified with Harappa by a historian viz., Wheeler.<sup>9</sup>

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1. इयमददाद्रभसमृणच्युतं दिवोदासं वध्र्यश्वाय दाशुषे ।  
या शश्वन्तमाचखादवसं पणिं ता ते दात्राणि तविषा सरस्वती । *Rv.* VI-61-1
  2. *Rv.* VII-18-22,25
  3. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, (35-8; 39-8) VII-21
  4. *Anukramaṇīs*, *Rv.* X-133
  5. तं शतन्यव शंबरस्य पुरो जगन्थाप्रतीति दस्योः । *Rv.* VI-31-4
  6. *Rv.* I-112-14; 16-18 ; 119-4; 130-7 to 10; II-19-6; IV-26-3; 30-20; VI-26-3; 43-1; 47-21,22; IX-61-2. etc
  7. य आनयत्परावतः सुनीति तुर्वशं यदुम् । *Rv.* VI-45-1  
पुरः सद्य इत्थाधिये दिवोदासाय शम्बरम् । अधत्यं तुर्वशं यदुम् ।। *Rv.* IX-61-2
  8. वृचीवतो यद्वरियूपीययां हन् पूर्वै अर्थे भियसापरो र्दत् । *Rv.* VI-27-5
  9. Wheeler, *The Dawn of Civilisation*, p-249

On the side of Divodāsa, there were chiefs like Rjaśvan, Āyu, and Kutsa, and on that of his opponents Cumuri, Dhuni, Śambara, Samadibha, Pipru, Śuṣṇa, Vetasu, Daṣoṇi and Tugra. Rjaśvan is said to have stormed the hundred towns of Vangṛd<sup>10</sup> and destroyed the fifty thousand followers of Pipru and Mṛgaya.<sup>11</sup> Āyu is known to have vanquished Veśa.<sup>12</sup> Kutsa is stated to have shattered the forts of Ilibiśa<sup>13</sup> and killed Śuṣṇa, “the foe of harvest.”<sup>14</sup> Divodāsa is credited with the conquest of the hundred stone citadels of Śambara<sup>15</sup> and killed him with thousand of his followers after an endeavours of forty years.<sup>16</sup>

In the *R̥gveda*, Divodāsa is said to have fought with the Pārāvatas and Bṛṣayas on the bank of Sarasvatī.<sup>17</sup> The Pārāvatas are mentioned in the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*<sup>18</sup> as in the eastern part, about the river Yamunā. Hillebrandt identifies them with the Parautai of potlemy and the Barsacutus of Arrian and locates them on the Haraqaiti or Arghandab in Arachosia.<sup>19</sup> Thus, it may well be that Divodāsa rose in the northern region, won some success there, which aroused other peoples in the east, resulting in his encounter with them.

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10. त्वं करज्जमुत पर्णयं वधीस्तेजिष्ठ्यातिथिग्वस्य वर्तनी ।  
 त्वं शता वङ्गदस्याभितुरोऽनानुदः परिषूता ऋजश्विना ।। *R̥v.* I-53-8
11. त्वं पिपुं मृगयं शूशुवांसमृजिश्वने वैदधिनाय रन्धीः ।  
 पञ्चशत्कृष्णा नि वपः सहस्रात्कं न पुरो जरिमा वि दर्दः ।। *R̥v.* IV-16-13
12. अहं वेषं नम्रमायवेऽकरमहं सव्याय पङ्गभीमरन्धयम् । *R̥v.* X-49-5
13. न्याविद्यदिलिबिशस्य दृळ्हा वि शुङ्गिणमभिनच्छुष्मिन्द्रः । *R̥v.* I-33-12
14. कुत्साय शुष्णमशुषं नि बर्हीः प्रपित्वे अहः कुवयं सहस्रा । *R̥v.* IV-16-12
15. शतमश्मन्मयीनां पुरमिन्द्रो यास्यत् । दिवोदासाय दाषुषे । *R̥v.* IV-30-20
16. त्वं तदुक्तमिन्द्र वर्हणा कः प्र यच्छता सहस्रा शूर दर्षीः ।  
 अव गिरेर्दासं शम्बरं हन्त्रावो दिवोदासं चित्रभिरूति ।। *R̥v.* VI-26-5
17. *R̥v.* VI-61-1
18. *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*, IX-4,11
19. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.I, p-363



Divodāsa appears to be an energetic supporter of the fire ritual.<sup>20</sup> So, Agni is once called by his name in the *R̥gveda*.<sup>21</sup> Modern scholars Hillebrandt<sup>22</sup> and Bhandarkar<sup>23</sup> have shown that Divodāsa, meaning 'the heavenly Dāsa,' was himself a Dāsa chief. But, Macdonell and Keith, refused this view and they opine that Atithigva and Divodāsa were identical.

Macdonell and Keith's objections are as below: "From one passage (*R̥v.* VI-61-1), where Divodāsa is said to have fought against the Paṇis, the Pārāvatas and Bṛṣaya, Hillebrandt has inferred that he was engaged in conflicts with tribes of Arachoria and interpreting the names as the 'heavenly Dāsa' conjectures that he was himself a Dāsa. This conclusion is not probable, for the Sarasvatī on which the battle in question took place and which can hardly be the Haraqaiti of Arachosia, would naturally designate the later Sarasvatī, while the Pārāvatas are mentioned in the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa* (IX-4-11) as in the east, about the Yamunā. Bergaigne's opinion that Divodāsa and Atithigva were different people cannot be supported in view of the complete parallelism in the acts of the two persons."<sup>24</sup>

#### Sudās :

Sudās was a famous king in the *R̥gvedic* country. In the *R̥gveda*, he is called Paijavana; it means that he was the son of Pijavana.<sup>25</sup>

20. क्राणा यदस्य पितरा मंहनेष्टाः पर्षत्यवथे अहन्ना सप्त होतृन् । *R̥v.* X-61-1

21. प्र दैवोदासो अग्निर्देवाँ अच्छा न मज्मना । *R̥v.* VIII-103-2

22. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.I, p-363

23. Dr. Bhandarkar, *Some aspects of Ancient Indian Culture*

24. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.I, p-363-364

25. *R̥v.* VII-18-22, 23,25; I-47-6 etc.

A Ṛgvedic *mantra* speaks that Divodāsa as the father of Sudās.<sup>26</sup> Combining these two, Sāyaṇa states that Pijavana was another name of Divodāsa.<sup>27</sup> In the *Ṛgveda*, various place the name of the Pijavana is suggested in the patronymic of Sudās. If Pijavana was father of Sudās, then Divodāsa must be grand-father of Sudās.

Sudās was the hero of the *Dāśarājña* war. He was the king of the Tṛtsu and Bharatas. At first, the seer Viśvāmitra was his priest, who accompanied him in his raids over the Vipāśā and Śutudrī, as described in the third *maṇḍala* of the *Ṛgveda*.<sup>28</sup> But for some reason or other, probably on account of the superior priestly knowledge of Vasiṣṭha, king Sudās appointed Vasiṣṭha in place of Viśvāmitra as his priest. The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*<sup>29</sup> calls him a great king and his priest is said to be Vasiṣṭha. The same thing is attested by *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*,<sup>30</sup> where his generosity to his priest is recorded. He had a queen named Sudevi, whom he is said to have received through the favour of Aśvins.<sup>31</sup> He appears with Trasadasyu in a (VII.19) hymn without hint of rivalry,<sup>32</sup> but elsewhere he seems to be referred to as defeated by Purukutsa, Trasadasy's father.<sup>33</sup>

26. दिवोदासं न पितरं सुदासः। *Ṛv.* VII-18-25

27. दिवोदास इति पिजवनस्यैव नामान्तरम्। Sāyaṇa on *Ṛv.* VII-18-25

28. See details in *Dāśarājña war*

29. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VII-34,9

30. *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*, XVI-11-14

31. याभिः सुदास ऊहतुः सुदेव्यं ताभिरु षु ऊतिभिरश्विना गतम्। *Ṛv.* I-112-19

32. त्वं धृष्णो धृषता वीतहव्यं प्रावो विश्वाभिरूतिभिः सुदासम्।

प्र पौरकुत्सिं त्रसदस्युमावः क्षेत्रसाता वृत्रहत्येषु पूरुम्।। *Ṛv.* VII-19-3

33. त्वं ह त्यदिन्द्र सप्ता युद्यन्तुरो वज्रिन्युरुकुत्साय दर्दः।

बर्हिर्न यत्सुदासे वृथा वर्गहो राजन्वरिहः पूरवे कः। *Ṛv.* I-63-7



The king Sudās, won the victory in the battle-field of *Dāśarājñā* war. The most important event of '*Dāśarājñā*' war is recorded in the *Rgveda maṇḍala* III-53 and VII-18, 33, and 83. These hymns describes that the king Sudās Paijavana leader of the Bharatas and Tṛtsus were fought against the allied forces of the '*Dāśarājñā*' kings. Aryan and non-Aryan tribes allied to the latter took part in the war. It is to be noted here that Pūru, Yadu, Turvaśa, Anu, Druhyu, Alina, Paktha, Bhalānas, Śiva, Viśānin, Śimyu, Vaikarṇa etc from the group of *Dāśarājñā* kings.

In the *Rgveda*, it is notable kings Sudās' won the war, one two battle-fields, one fought on the bank of Paruṣṇī and the other on the bank of Yamunā.

#### **Purukutsa :**

Purukutsa is a one of the leading kings in the *Rgveda*. He was mentioned several times in the *Rgveda*. He appears as a conqueror of the Dāsas. One *mantra* of the *Rgveda* mentions that Indra is stated to have assisted Purukutsa in his wars with the Dāsas. It is as below:

“Favoured by your protection, Indra, we solicit new wealth; by this adoration men glorify you at sacrifices, for that you have shattered with your bolt the seven cities of Śarat, killing the opponents, (of sacred rites), and giving their spoils to Purukutsa.”<sup>34</sup>

In a hymn of the *Rgveda*, Indra is said to be fighting for Purukutsa and bringing gain to him.

34. सनेम तेऽवसा नव्य इन्द्रः प्र पूरवः स्तवन्त एना यज्ञैः।

सप्त यत्पुरः शर्म शारदीर्द्धन्दासीः पुरुकुत्साय शिक्षन् ॥ *Rv.* VI-20-10

“Indra, wielder of the thunderbolt, fighting on behalf of Purukutsa, you overturned the seven cities; O king, you did cut off for Sudās the wealth of Amhas, as if it had been a tuft of sacred grass and gave it to him, who pleased you with oblations.”<sup>35</sup>

In another hymn of the *Rgveda*, it is said that the Ásvins to have guarded Purukutsa.

“With those aids by which you enriched ‘Śucanti’ and gave him a handsome habitation, and rendered the scorching heat pleasurable to Atri, and by which you preserved Pṛṣṇigu and Purukutsa ; with them, Ásvins come willingly hither.”<sup>36</sup>

These references make it clear that Purukutsa was as much a favourite of the gods and that in the beginning, he scored some significant successes in the encounters with his enemies and thus ranked as a great king of his time.

The king Purukutsa’s son was Trasadasyu. In the *Rgveda*, he is accordingly called Paurakutsya<sup>37</sup> or Paurakutsi,<sup>38</sup> One of the hymns of the *Rgveda*, mentions the birth of Purukutsa’s son. These *mantras* are as follows :

“The seven Ṛṣis were the protectors of this our (kingdom) when the son of Durgahā was in bond ; performing worship, they obtained for his queen from the favour of Indra and Varuṇa, a son like Indra the slayer of foes dwelling near the gods.

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35. *Rv.* VII-19-3

36. याभिः शुचन्ति धनसां सुषंसदं तप्तं घर्ममोम्यावन्तमत्रये ।

याभिः प्रश्निगुं पुरुकुत्समावतं ताभिरुषु उतिभिःरश्विना गतम् । *Rv.* I-112-7

37. उत त्वे मा पौरुकुत्सास्य सूरैस्त्रसदस्योहिरणिनो रराणाः ।

वहन्तु मा दश श्येतासो अस्य गौरीक्षितस्य कृतुभिर्नु सच्चे । *Rv.* V-33-8

38. *Rv.* VII-19-3

The wife of Purukutsa propitiated you two, Indra and Varuṇa, with oblations and prostrations, and therefore you gave her the king Trasadasyu, the slayer of foes, dwelling near the gods.”<sup>39</sup>

Different conclusions have been drawn by modern scholars, on these *mantras*. According to Sāyaṇa, Purukutsa was captured in the battle, whereupon his wife Purukutsāni secured a son to restore the fortunes of the Purus.<sup>40</sup> According to Sayāṇa, the word 'Daurgahe', is patronymic of Purukutsa, which means 'descendant of Durgaha',<sup>41</sup> Sieg, offers different interpretation. According to him the word 'Daurgage', which occurs in the hymn, and which in the ordinary view is rendered 'descendant of Durgaha,' an ancestor of Purukutsa, is the name of the horse, the hymn recording the success of an *Aśvamedha* (horse sacrifice) undertaken by Purukutsa for his wife, as by kings in late times, to secure a son.<sup>42</sup> This interpretation is supported by the version of *Daurgahe*, as given in the *Śathapatha Brāhmaṇa*.<sup>43</sup>

Purukutsa and Trasadasyu were great kings both according to the Vedic and the Purāṇic and epic evidence. In the *R̥gveda*, Purukutsa appears as a king of the Purus and a conqueror of the

39. *R̥v.* IV-42-8, 9

अस्माकमत्र पितरस्त आसत्सप्त ऋषयो दौर्गहि बध्यमाने ।  
त आयजन्त त्रसदस्युमस्या इन्द्रं न वृत्रतुरमर्धदेवम् ॥  
पुरुकुत्सानि हि वामदाशद्वयोभिरिन्द्रावरुण नमोभिः ।  
अथा राजानं त्रसदस्युमस्या वृत्रहणं ददथुरर्धदेवं ॥

40. Sāyaṇa's note on the Forty second hymn of the fourth *Maṇḍala*

41. दौर्गहि दुर्गहस्य पुत्रे पुरुकुत्से । Sāyaṇa on *R̥v.* IV-42-8

42. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol. I, p.542

43. एतेऽएवा पूर्वेऽअहनी विश्वजिदतिरात्रस्तेन ह पुरुकुत्सो दौर्गहिणोजऽ ऐक्ष्वाको राजा  
तस्मादेतद्वृषिणाऽभ्यनूक्तमस्माकमत्र पितरस्तऽआसत्सप्तऽऋषयो दौर्गहिण बध्यमानऽ इति ।  
*Śathapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XIII-5-4-5

Dāsas.<sup>44</sup> At one place in the *R̥gveda*, he is said to be a contemporary of king Sudās.<sup>45</sup> But, whether he was an enemy or just only a contemporary of Sudās, is not clear. Because the Purus fought against Sudās in the *Dāśarājñā* war. If Purukutsa was a contemporary of Sudās and being the ruler of the Purus, naturally he might have fought against Sudās.

According to Macdonell and Keith<sup>46</sup> and other scholars, the *R̥gvedic* kings of these names belonged to the Puru family. Consequently F.E. Pargiter attempted to prove that the *R̥gvedic* kings, Purukutsa and Trasadasyu, were different from the Aikṣvāku Purukutsa and Trasadasyu of the *Purāṇas*.<sup>47</sup> This is evidently false, because, in the *Śathapatha Brāhmaṇa*, Purukutsa is called an *Aikṣvāka*.<sup>48</sup> But Paurava Purukutsa and Trasadasyu are absolutely unknown to the whole of Indian literature. In this connection P.L.Bhargava<sup>49</sup> observes as follows :

This is what we find in one passage of the *R̥gveda* where its author Vāmadeva, who was a protégé of Somaka who belonged to the Paurava family, praises Trasadasyu,<sup>50</sup> for having given aid to the Purus. In another passage a Ṛṣi of the Bhāradvāja family, a which ws closely connected with the Paurava family, speaks of the praise of Indra by the Purus and in justification of this praise,

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44. *R̥v.* IV-20-10

45. *R̥v.* I-63-7

46. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol. I, p-541-542

47. Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, pp-133-134 and 169-170

48. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XIII-5-4-5

49. P.L. Bhargava, *India in the Vedic Age*, pp-143-144

50. उतो हि वां दात्रा सन्ति पूर्वा या पुरुभ्यस्त्रसदस्युर्नितोशे।

क्षेत्रासां ददथुर्वरासां घनं दस्युभ्यो अभिभूतिमुग्रम्॥ *R̥v.* IV-38-1

mentions the instances of persons favoured by Indra among whom the first is Purukutsa followed by Uśanas, Turvaśa and Yadu and Dabhīti.<sup>51</sup> This in no way connects Purukutsa with the Purus. On the other hand, these kings are never called Pauravas to regard Puru in apposition with Trasadasyu in a passage which in fact mentions four kings Vitahavya, Sudās, Trasadasyu, and Puru,<sup>52</sup> it is absolutely unjustifiable. We can, on the same analogy and with for greater justification, regard the word Puru in hymn (I-63-7) to be in apposition with Sudās,<sup>53</sup> for the latter was certainly a Paurava according to the unanimous testimony of the Purāṇic literature, and his grand-father Divodāsa appears to be actually called a Puru in hymn (I-130-7) of the *Ṛgveda*.<sup>54</sup> It is thus clear that there is not an iota of truth in the belief that the *Ṛgveda* regards Purukutsa and Trasadasyu as Purus. Nor does any other branch of Indian literature regard them as Purus.

Nor can it be said that even if the *Ṛgvedic* Purukutsa and Trasadasyu were not Purus, they were different from the Purāṇic Purukutsa and Trasadasyu. A descendant of the *Ṛgvedic* Trasadasyu calls himself Tryaruṇa Trivṛṣṇa<sup>55</sup> and the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa* calls him Trayaruṇa Traidhatva.<sup>56</sup> A near descendant of the Purāṇic Trasadasyu is also named Trayyaruna and his father is called Tridhanvā. It is clear that Trayyaruna Traidhanvā is simply a variant of Tryaruṇa Traidhatva. Thus, it is established beyond a

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51. *Ṛv.* IV-20-10 to 13

52. *Ṛv.* VII-19-3

53. *Ṛv.* I-63-7

54. *Ṛv.* I-130-7

55. त्रैवृष्णो अग्ने दशभिः सहस्रैवैश्वानर ऋरुणश्चिकेत । *Ṛv.* V-27-1

56. *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*, XIII-3-12

shadow of doubt that the Purāṇic Purukutsa and Trsadasyu are identical with the kings of the same names in Vedic literature.

The *Ṛgveda* shows that Purukutsa was not the son of Māndhātṛ for he is called Durgaha in a hymn,<sup>57</sup> while his son Trasadasyu is called Gairikṣita as well as Paurakutsya in another hymn.<sup>58</sup> This clearly means that at least two generations intervened between Māndhātṛ and Purukutsa, and this is the only difference between the Vedic and Purāṇic Purukutsas. But the numerous synochronisms, which occur in both the Vedic and Purāṇic literatures in connection with Purukutsa's immediate descendants, show that the *Purāṇas* have omitted at least two names between Māndhātṛ and Purukutsa, and these names are undoubtedly those of Durgaha and Girikṣita.

#### **Trasadasyu :**

Trasadasyu also is considered as one of the great *Ṛgvedic* kings. The *Ṛgveda* mentions Trsadasyu as a son of Purukutsa.<sup>59</sup> He was a *Ṛgvedic* seer also. As stated in *Ṛv.* IV. 42, he identifies himself with Indra and Varuṇa, on the basis of his being born by the grace of Indra and Varuṇa. When Purukutsa, son of Durgaha was 'in bonds,' the seven seers were the protectors of his kingdom. With their help, the queen of Purukutsāni propitiated Indra and Varuṇa who were pleased to bless her with a son, Trsadasyu. The relevant two *mantras* are as under :

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57. *Ṛv.* IV-42-8

58. अस्य गैरिक्षितस्य क्रतुभिर्नु सच्चे । *Ṛv.* V-33-8

59. *Ṛv.* V-33-8; VII-19-3; VIII-19-6; IV-42-8



"The seven Ṛṣis were the protectors of this our kingdom when the son of Durgaha was in bonds; performing worship they obtained for his queen from the favour of Indra and Varuṇa, a son like Indra the slayer of foes, dwelling near the gods.

The wife of Purukutsa propitiated you two, Indra and Varuṇa, with oblations and prostrations and therefore you gave her the king Trasadasyu, the slayer of foes, dwelling near the gods."<sup>60</sup>

Sayāṇa refers to an *Itihāsa* (history) contained in these *mantras*. According to him<sup>61</sup> - "Purukatsa went in the battle against his enemies but, he was bound and made impression by the enemies. At this time his wife called Purukutsānī was very much afflicted and became anxious about the protection of the kingdom. At this time accidentally these arrived *Sapta Ṛṣis*, whom she worshipped with due hospitality. Also she informed about the prityable condition of the kingdom. With pleased mind *Sapta Ṛṣis* advised her to worship Indrā-Varuṇa with unstinted devotion. So too, the queen worshipped Indrā-Varuṇa, and by their blessings she obtain a son called Trasadasyu."

In the *Rgveda*, Trasadasyu is called Gairikṣita<sup>62</sup> and his father Purukutsa was a descendant of Durgaha.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, this genealogy appears to be Durgaha > Girikṣita > Purukutsa > Trasadasyu. Trasadasyu was the ancestor of Ṭṛkṣī.<sup>64</sup> Trasadasyu's

60. *Rv.* IV-42-8, 9

61. पुरुकुत्सस्य महिषी दौर्गहि बन्धनस्थिते ।  
पत्यावराजकं दृष्ट्वा राष्ट्रं पुत्रस्य लिप्सया ।।  
यद्वृच्छया समायातान् सप्तर्षिन् पर्यपूजयत् ।  
ते च प्रीताः पुनः प्रोचुर्यजेन्द्रावरुणौ भ्रशम् ।।  
सा चेन्द्रावरुणाविष्ट्वा त्रसदस्युमजीजनत् ।  
इतिहासमिमं जानन्नृषिभूते ऋचाविह ।। *Sāyāṇa*

62. *Rv.* V-33-8

63. *Rv.* IV-42-8

64. येभिस्तृक्षि वृषणा त्रासदस्यवं महे क्षत्राय जिवन्तः । *Rv.* VIII-22-7

chronological position is not clear in the *Rgveda*. But in one *mantra* of the *Rgveda*, his father Purukutsa appears to be a contemporary of king Sudās.<sup>65</sup> The *Rgveda* refers to a king Kuruśravaṇa, who is also called called Trāsadasyava ‘descendant of Trasadasyu.’<sup>66</sup> Kuruśravaṇa’s father was Mitrātithi and son Upamaśravas. But relation of Mitrātithi to Tṛkṣī is not clear in the *Rgveda*. In this connection Macdonell and Keith say - “Trasadasyu himself seems to have been an energetic king. His people, the Purus, were settled on the Sarasvatī, which was no doubt, the stream in the middle country, that locality according well with the later union of the Purus with the Kuru people, who inhabited that country. This union is exemplified in the person of Kuruśravaṇa.”<sup>67</sup>

Another descendant of Trasadasyu was Tryaruṇa Traivṛṣṇa.<sup>68</sup> According to the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*, he is called Trayaruṇa Traidhātva ‘descendant of Tridhātu.’<sup>69</sup> The order of these two predecessors of Tryaruṇa cannot be determined in any way from Vedic literature. The *Purāṇas* mention, a prince named Tridhanvan preceded Trayaruṇa in the succession. On this confusion, P.L.Bhargava opines that it is clear that Trayaruṇa Traidhanva is simply a variant of Tryaruṇa Traidhātva.<sup>70</sup>

Trasadasyu appears in several *Brāhmaṇas* as a famous sacrificer of the ancient time.<sup>71</sup> According to *Jaiminiya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa*, Trasadasyu, Para Āṭṇāra, and Kakśivant Auśija are called “ancient great kings.”<sup>72</sup>

65. *Rv.* I-63-7

66. कुरुश्रवणमावृणी राजानं त्रासदस्यवम् । *Rv.* X-33-4

67. Macdonel and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.1, p-327

68. त्रैवृष्णो अग्ने दशभिः सहस्रैर्वैश्वानर ऋरुणाश्चिकेत । *Rv.* V-27-1

69. *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*, XIII-3-12

70. P.L. Bhargava, *India in the Vedic Age*, p-144

71. *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*, XXV-16

72. एवं हैवैतमुद्गीथं पर आट्णारः कक्षीवांस्त्रसदस्युरिति पूर्वे महाराजाः श्रोत्रियाः सहस्रपुत्रपुत्रमुपनिषेदुः ।

*Jaiminiya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa*, II-6-11

### 5. Dānastutis

It is a fact that the Ṛgvedic hymns are generally meant for purpose of sacrifice. Such hymns however, contain the fact of eloquence of seers praising the god to induce him to grant favourable voice and generosity. The Ṛgvedic hymns inherit the description of some definite families who were at the spiritual climax of the sacrificial ceremony. Instruction of such sacrificial ceremonies in course of time became the source of livelihood of such families. In various places (II-2-9., X-64-12 etc), the composition of the hymns is compared to milch-cow, taking care of the family of the seer. At times, these seers with their sons were moving to many kings where they use to offer their service of chanting the *Mantras*. At the time of the sacrifice when such sages bring forward newest compositions and king was giving appropriate *Dakṣiṇa*.

The *Dakṣiṇa* itself is glorified in the *Ṛgveda*, X-107. The idea in this hymn is that the *Dakṣiṇa* is to be considered as a definite gift for the gods and as a divine sacrifice-exactly. At the same time, it is learnt from these hymns, as also from others wherein the *Dakṣiṇa* consists of that which the poet longs for. Mostly, the poet expresses his expectation or his thanks only in general. At times, however, he makes exact sketches and clothes his thanks directly with regard to the offering the gift in a definite hymns or a *mantra*. Such a hymn or such a *mantra* has the characteristic of a *Dānastuti*.

The expression *Dānastuti* rather occurs for the first time in the *Bṛhaddevatā*, VI-45, where, it is determined, that the concluding pair of verses (38,39) of the hymn VIII-15 of the *Ṛgveda*, are considered according to the tradition as the *Dānastuti* of king Kaśu.

The constituents 'Stu' and 'Dāna' occur side by side in the *Rgveda*.<sup>1</sup> Even there are still other technical expressions in the later literature which may be designated as *Dānastuti*. However, every *mantra* in which the thank for the gift is expressed is not recognised in the Indian annotated literature as *Dānastuti*. One employs the designation in narrow sense for an almost definite form of saying of thanks. The verses recognised as *Dānastuti* in the *Bṛhaddevatā* and *Anukramaṇī*, form hymns of *Dānastutis*.

Above all, the accounts which the *Anukramaṇī* gives in its introductory chapter is important: राज्ञां च दानस्तुतयः। (II-23). The *Dānastutis* are even dedicated to kings. Indian commentators consider as a definite characteristic, that only a royal donor should have such a *Dānastuti* and this should not find place in the interior of a true hymn.

The constituents *Stu* and *Dāna* is already mentioned in the *Rgveda*, V-33-6. Even there are still other technical expression in the later literature called *Raibhīs*, *Nārāśaṁśis*, and even at times *Gāthās*. These three designations already occur together in the *Rgveda*.<sup>2</sup>

**Raibhīs :** The word *Raibhīs* derived form *Rebha* (bard). Therefore, *Raibhīs* are verses of the bards. The three *Mantras* of the *Atharvaveda* XX-127-4,5,6, are called *Raibhīs*. They form an introduction to the praise of Parikṣita. *Gāthā* is to be supplemented by *Raibhīs*.

1. स न एनीं वसवानो रयीं दाः प्रार्य स्तुषे तुविमघस्य दानम्। *Rv.* V-33-6

2. रैभ्यासीदुनुदेयी नाराशंसी न्योचनी।

सूर्याया भद्रमिद्रासो गाथयैति परिष्कृतम्।। *Rv.* X-85-6

**Nārāśam̐sis** : The word *Nārāśam̐sis* consists of two elements *Nara* and *Śam̐sa* and are referred in the *Ṛgveda*.<sup>3</sup> In the *Nirukta*, Yāska says - येन नराः प्रशस्यन्ते स नाराशंसो मन्त्रः।<sup>4</sup> A *mantra* in which the lords are praised is called *Nārāśam̐sa*. The *Nārāśam̐sis* are concerned with the living princes and with eulogy of their generosity. The *Bṛhaddevatā* says : “the stanzas in which the deeds of kings and their gifts, great, small and middling, are told should be understood to be called ‘Laudations of Men’ (*Nārāśam̐si*), as the praise of kings (is expressed) by them in the tenth *maṇḍala* of the *Ṛgveda*.”<sup>5</sup> According to the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*,<sup>6</sup> *Nābhanediṣṭha- Sūkta*. (X-62) in the *Ṛgveda* is a *Nārāśam̐sa-Sūkta*. Even the hymns I-161 and IV-37 are according to the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* - अर्भवं नाराशंसम्।<sup>7</sup> wherein, the *Ṛbhus* are said to be men (ऋभवो हि नरो मनुष्याः।). Sāyaṇa’s explanation of the word *Nārāśam̐sa* .... नराः शस्यन्ते (कथ्यन्ते) यस्मिन् सूक्ते तन्नाराशंसम्।<sup>8</sup> “When in a hymn, men are praised then it is a *Nārāśam̐sa*.” Thus, the *Nārāśam̐sis* essentially designate that which is called as *Dānastuti* in later times.

**Gāthās** : *Gāthā* in the *Ṛgveda* usually means only ‘song’. The expression ‘*Gāthās*’ in this context is to be comprehended has even the same significance. In the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, the verse ‘आसन्दीवती धान्यादम्’, is designated as a यज्ञगाथा।<sup>9</sup> In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, it is simply named as *Gāthā*.<sup>10</sup> The *Atharvaveda* refers

3. *Ṛv.* II-34-6 ; VI-24-2; III-16-4

4. Yāska, *Nirukta*, IX-9

5. कर्माणि याभि कथितानि राज्ञाम् दानानि चोच्चवचमध्यमानि।

नाराशंसीरिति ऋचस्ताः प्रतीयाद् याभिः स्तुतिर्दाशतयिषु राज्ञाम्।। *Bṛhaddevatā*, III-154.

6. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VI-27-14

7. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, V-13-11

8. Sāyaṇa on *Ṛv.* X-85-6

9. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VIII-21-21

10. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XIII-5-4-2

to the *Gāthās* to be the special *Mantras* of *Indragāthā* and others. For eg, in the *Sūkta* XX-128 (12 to 016) of the *Atharvaveda*, the five *mantras* are considered to be *Indragāthā*, particularly, the *Gāthās* treat of the *Yajña*.

The *Dānastuti* and *Nārāśamśis* are compared with the post-Vedic '*Praśastis*' (song praise). The *Praśastis* can however be seen in the inscriptions. The praise of the princes, their was deeds, their booty and generosity are the content thereof. The *R̥gvedānukramaṇī* of Kātyāyana, states in its introductory chapter : राज्ञां च दानस्तुतयः।. Hence, the *Dānastutis* and *Nārāśamśis* may be compared with the *Praśastis* of the Gupta kings. For example, Bhitari-pillar inscription of Skandagupta states as follow :<sup>11</sup>

- 1 सर्व राजोच्छेत्तुः पृथिव्यामप्रतिरथस्य चतुरुदधिसलिला स्वादितयशसो धनदवरुणेन्द्रान्तकसमस्य ।
- 2 कृतान्तपरशोः न्यायागतानेकगोहिरण्य कओटिप्रदस्य चिरोत्सन्ना श्वमेधाहर्तुर्महाराज श्रीगुप्तप्रपौत्रस्य ।

The modern Vedic scholars found that the *Dānastutis* show their little or more distinct historical accounts. Winternitz writes : "In the *Dānastutis* however are always mentioned the names of pious donors and they are concerned undoubtedly with historical results or with real events. There, they are also important."<sup>12</sup>

### **Dānastutis :**

#### **R̥gveda, I-100-16 and 17**

The hymn I-100 of the *R̥gveda*, is attributed to R̥jraśva, Ambarīṣa, Sahadeva, Bhāyamāna and Surādhas, the sons of the

11. Raj Bali Pandey, Historical and Literary Inscriptions, Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Varanasi, 1962, p-99.

12. Winternitz, *Geschichte Der Indischen Literature*, Vol. I, p-99.

seer Vṛṣāgira. These names themselves are found in the *Mantras* 16 and 17. Mostly, the seer chants the hymn in which he invokes Indra to help his kings who are preparing probably for war. He praises in these two *Mantras* the reward that he has received. He conclude that victory may be attained through Indra's help. The *Mantras* are as below:<sup>13</sup>

"The red and black courses, long-limbed, well-caparisoned, and celestial and harnessed, well-pleased, to the yoke of the chariot in which the showerer of benefits is conveyed, for the enrichment of Rjraśva and is recognized amongst human hosts.

Indra, showerer of benefits the Vṛṣagiras, Rjraśva and his companions Ambarīṣa, Sahadeva, Bhayamāna and Suradhas, address to you this propitiatory praise."

#### Rv. IV-15-7 to 10

In this hymn, seven to ten *mantras* speak of *Dānastuti*. Vāmadeva Gautama is the seer of this hymn. The *mantras* are as follows : <sup>14</sup>

"When the prince, the son of Sahadeva, promised to present me with two horses, I withdrew not when called before him.

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13. Rv. I-100-16,17

रोहिच्छ्यावा सुमदंशुर्ललामीर्धुक्षा राये ऋज्राश्वस्य  
वृषण्वन्तं बिभ्रती धूर्षु रथं मन्द्रा चिकेत नाहुषीषु विक्षु ॥ 16 ॥  
एतत्त्यक्त इन्द्र वृष्ण उक्तं वार्षागिरा अभि गृणन्ति राधः  
ऋज्राश्वः प्रष्टिभिरम्बरीषः सहदेवो भयमानः सुराधाः ॥ 17 ॥

14. Rv. IV-15-7 to 10

बेदद्यन्मा हरिभ्यां कुमारः साहदेव्यः । अच्छा न हूत उदरम् ॥ 7 ॥  
उत त्या यजता हरी कुमारात्साहदेव्यात् । प्रयता सद्य आ ददे ॥ 8 ॥  
एष वां देवावश्विना कुमारः साहदेव्यः । दीर्घायुरस्तु सोमकः ॥ 9 ॥  
तं युवां देवावश्विना कुमारं साहदेव्यम् । दीर्घायुषं कृणोतन ॥ 10 ॥

But immediately accepted those two excellent and well-trained horses from the prince, the son of Sahadeva.

Divine Ásvins, may this prince, Somaka, the son of Sahadeva, your worshipper, enjoy long-life.

Divine Ásvins, do you, two make the prince the son of Sahadeva, long-lived."

#### Observation :

*Dānastuti* mantras of this hymn are concerned with Somaka Sāhadeva a prince. The seer explains that he has received two cloths as gifts from king Somaka. According to *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*,<sup>15</sup> this prince Somaka is one of the Śṛñjayas. In this hymn, the fourth *mantra* refers to Śṛñjaya Daivavāta with his sacrificial fire.<sup>16</sup> Three generations of Śṛñjayas as: Śṛñjaya > Sahadeva > Somaka.

#### Rv. IV-32-19 to 24

In this hymn, the *Mantras* 19 to 24 deal with the *Dānastuti*. Vāmadeva Gautama is the Seer of this hymn. The *mantras* 17 and 18 express the desire for a *Dakṣiṇa* which indeed is towards Indra. In the *Mantras* 19 to 21, Indra is invoked as giver in abundance. The donor is not mentioned in this *Dānastuti*. The seer Vāmadeva Gautama describes the gifts as ten jars with golden things and the two brown mares. The *Dānastuti* mantras run :<sup>17</sup>

15. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VII-34

16. अयं यः सृज्ये पुरो दैववाते समिद्यते । Rv. IV-15-4

17. Rv. IV-32-19 to 24

दश ते कलशानां हिरण्यानामधीमहि । भूरिदा असि वृत्रहन् ॥ 19 ॥

भूरिदा भूरि देहि नो मा दध्नं भूर्या भर । भूरि घेदिन्द्र दित्ससि ॥ 20 ॥

भूरिदा ह्यसि श्रुतः पुरुत्रा शूर वृत्रहन् । आ नो भजस्व राधसि ॥ 21 ॥



“May we obtain from you, ten golden ewers, for you, slayer of Vṛtra, are a bountiful giver.

A bountiful giver are you, Indra: give bountifully to us; give not little; bring much; for verily you desire to give much.

Verily you are renowned amongst many as a bountiful giver; here, slayer of Vṛtra, make us sharers in wealth.

Wise Indra, I praise your brown horses; bestower of cows you are not regardless of your worshippers; with those two steeds terrify not our cattle.

Like two puppets on an arranged, new and slender stage, your two brown steeds are brilliant at sacrifices.

You two innocuous brown steeds are sufficient at sacrifices for me, whether going to them in a wagon drawn by oxen, or going without such a conveyance.”

Rv. V-18-5

The small hymn V-18 of five *Mantras* refers to *Dānastuti* in its last *Mantra*. The former *mantras* form an introduction to the *Dānastuti*. A seer Dvita Mṛktavāhā Ātreya from the Atri family describes that he has received the gift of fifty horses. The donor is not mentioned here. It runs as below:<sup>18</sup>

प्र ते बभ्रू विचक्षणं शंसामि गोषणो नपात् । माभ्यां गा अनु शिश्रथः ॥ 22 ॥

कनीनकेव विद्रधे नवे दुपदे अर्भके । बभ्रू यामेषु शोभेते ॥ 23 ॥

अरं म उत्तयाम्णोऽरमनुत्तयाम्णे । बभ्रूत्तयामेष्वस्त्रिधा ॥ 24 ॥

18. Rv. V-18-5

ये मे पञ्चशतं ददुरश्वानां सधस्तुति ।

द्युमदग्ने महि श्रवो बृहत्कृधि मधोनां नृवदम्र नृणाम् ॥ 5 ॥

“Immortal Agni, bestow upon those, opulent men, who upon (my) praise of you, gave to me, fifty horses and brilliant, ample and abundant food, supporting numerous dependents.”

Rv. V-27

This hymn of six *Mantras* may be designated as *Dānastuti*. The *Anukramanī*,<sup>19</sup> states that the seer of this hymn is either king (mentioned therein) or Atri. The seer is found to be in acknowledgement of the gifts from different kings on different occasions. First three *mantras* describe the gift of Ṛyāruṇa of the Purukutsa family on two occasions; and four to six, king Aśvamedha. The *Sūkta* runs as under:<sup>20</sup>

“Agni, who are the protector of the good, most wise, powerful and opulent; Ṛyāruṇa, the son of Trivṛṣṇa, has become renowned, Vaiśvānara, in that he has bestowed upon me a pair of cattle with a waggon, and with ten thousands of treasure.

Agni, Vaiśvānara, you are deservedly praised and exalted by us; bestow happiness upon Ṛyāruṇa, who gives me hundreds of Suvarṇas, twenty cattle and a pair of burden-bearing horses.

As Ṛyāruṇa, pleased by the eulogies of me who have many children asks earnestly the gifts upon me, so does Trasadasyu, desirous Agni, of your valued favour through your exceeding praise.

19. *Anukramanī*, V-27

20. *Rv.* V-27

अनस्वन्ता सत्परिर्माहे मे गावा चेतिष्ठो असुरो मघोनः  
त्रैवृष्णो अग्ने दशभिः सहस्रैर्वैश्वानर त्र्यरुणाश्चिकेत ॥ १ ॥  
यो मे शता च विंशतीं च गोनां हरी च युक्ता सुधुरा ददाति  
वैश्वानर सुष्टुतो वावृधानोऽग्ने यच्छ त्र्यरुणाय शर्म ॥ २ ॥

When the king Ásvamedha gives to him who solicits of him as a benefactors, saying (bestow wealth) upon me and comes to him with a verse in your praise, do you, Agni, grant intelligence to the king who wishes to offer sacrifice to you.

Whose hundred robust oxen yield me delight, as the triple-mixed Soma, the offering of Ásvamedha gratifies you.

The *Bṛhaddevatā* describes in the three half verses:<sup>21</sup> “In the (hymn) addressed to Agni, ‘with a wagon,’ the seer Atri himself, pleased with his gifts proclaimed these (kings) as royal seers, so say some authorities. There also appears a prayer to Agni on their behalf in consequence of (their request). The thousand, three hundred and twenty kine, (and) a golden wagon with two oxen, king Ṛyāruṇa gave to Atri. And Ásvamedha (gave) a hundred oxen, Trasadasyu much wealth.”

Rv. V-30-12 to 15

In this hymn, 12 to 15 *mantras* are evident to deal with the *Dānastutis*. The seer Babhru (of the Atri family) of this hymn, sings the *Dānastuti* of Ṛṇañcaya, the king of the tribe of Ruśama people.

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एवा ते अग्ने सुमतिं चकानो नविष्टाय नवमं त्रसदस्युः  
 यो मे गिरस्तुविजातस्य पूर्विर्युक्तेनाभि त्र्यरुणो गृणाति ॥ ३ ॥  
 यो म इति प्रवोचत्यश्वमेधाय सूरये । ददद्वा सनिं यते ददन्मेधामृतायते ॥ ४ ॥  
 यस्य मा परुषाः शतमुद्धर्षयन्त्युक्षणः । अश्वमेधस्य दानाः सोमा इव त्र्याशिरः ॥ ५ ॥

21. Śaunaka, *Bṛhaddevatā*, V-29,30,31

दानतुष्टः शशंसैतान् राजर्षिनिति केचन ।  
 अयुतं च गवां त्रीणि शतान्यथ च विंशतिम् ॥  
 सौवर्णं शकटं गोभ्यां त्र्यरुणोऽदानृपोऽत्रये ।  
 अश्वमेधः शतं चोक्ष्णां त्रसदस्युर्धनं बहु ॥

In all these four *mantras*, the seer refers to 'Soma-juice' indicating Soma-ritual in honour of Indra, praised above. The *mantras* are as below:<sup>22</sup>

"The Ruśamas giving me four thousand cows, Agni, have done well, we have accepted the wealth, the donations of the leader of leaders Ṛṇāñcaya.

The Ruśamas, Agni, have presented to me a beautiful abode, with thousands of cattle; the sharp libations have exhilarated Indra upon the breaking up of the (gloom) investing night.

The (gloom) investing night has dispersed with the dawn upon the appearance of Ṛṇāñcaya, the king of the Ruśamas; Babhru being summoned, going like a fleet courser, has received the four thousand cattle.

We have accepted, Agni, the four thousand cattle from the Ruśamas and the glowing, the golden jar prepared for the solemnity."

In this connection, the *Bṛhaddevatā* says - "others say that he (Atri) addressed this hymn to the kings, for one cannot give to oneself, and the seer received the gifts from each king. Ṛṇāñcaya chose the seer Babhru, son of Atri, to officiate as priest at a Soma

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22. *Rv.* V-30-12 to 15

भद्रमिदं रुशमा अग्ने अक्रनावां चत्वारि ददतः सहस्रा ।

ऋणञ्चयस्य प्रयता मघानि प्रत्यग्रभीष्म नृतमस्य नृणाम् ॥ 12 ॥

सुपेशसं माव स्रजन्त्यस्तं गवां सहस्रै रुशमासो अग्ने ।

तीव्रा इन्द्रमममन्दुः सुतासोऽत्कोर्व्युष्टौ परितक्म्यायाः ॥ 13 ॥

औच्छत्सा रात्री परितक्म्या याँ ऋणञ्चये राजनि रुशमानाम्

अत्यो न वाजी रघुरज्यमानो बभ्रुश्चत्वार्यसनत्सहस्रा ॥ 14 ॥

चतुःसहस्रं गव्यस्य पश्वः प्रत्यग्रभीष्म रुशमेष्वाग्ने ।

धर्मश्चित्तप्तः प्रवृजे य आसीदयस्मयस्तम्वादाम विप्राः ॥ 15 ॥

- sacrifice in which a thousand sacrificial fees were bestowed. So he (Babhru) sacrificed for him (Ṛṇañcaya). And the king of Ruśamas gave him four thousand four hundred cows and a golden caldron. And he received golden caldrons for the *Pravargya* rites. And having received them, the seer as he went along, was questioned on the way by the middle Agni as well as by Indra; and he related all this with the four stanzas 'this good; "23

Ṛv. V-33-7 to 10

In this hymn seven to ten *mantras* are referred to *Dānastuti*. It is a *Dānastuti* of the seer Saṁvaraṇa received gifts from patrons Trasadasyu, Girikṣita, Vidatha Marutāśva, Cyāyamana, and Dhanvaya Lakṣamaṇya. The former *mantras* indicate Soma ritual in honour of Indra praised there. The *Dānastuti mantras* run: 24

"Hero, Indra, with your protection defend up, praising and worshipping you, and be propitiated by drinking of the well-effused and agreeable Soma-juice that yield (a defensive) covering in combat.

23. Śaunaka, *Bṛahaddevatā*, V-32 to 36

राज्ञः प्रति च तत्सूक्तं बभाष इति केचन ।  
आत्मा हि नात्मने दद्यात् अग्रहीनृपतेन्मृषिः॥  
अत्रेः सुतमृषिं बभ्रुम् आरत्विज्याय ऋणञ्चयः ।  
सहस्रदक्षिणे सोमे वव्रे तं सोऽप्ययाजयत्॥  
ददौ च रौशमो राजा सहस्राणि शतानि च ।  
तस्मै चत्वारि चतवारि महावीरं च काञ्चनम्॥  
प्रवर्गेषु महावीराः सौवर्णास्तस्य चाभवन् ।  
प्रतिगृह्य ऋषिर्गच्छन् मध्यसेनानिना पथि॥  
पृष्ट इन्द्रेण चाचख्यौ भद्रं चतसृभिश्च तत् ।

24. Ṛv. V-33-7 to 10

एवा न इन्द्रोतिभिरव पाहि गृणतः शूर कारुन् ।  
उत त्वचं ददतो वाजसातौ पिप्रीहि मध्वः सुषुतस्य चारोः॥ 7॥

May those ten bring horses, the gift tome of the pious gold-possessing Trasadasyu, the son of Purukutsa of the race of Girikṣita, convey me to the sacrifice, and may I proceed quickly with the rites.

Or, may those bay, well-actioned horses, the donation of Vidatha, the son of Marutāśva, (convey me); or may the thousands of treasure which he was bestowing upon and giving to me, entitled to respect, and the ornaments which he presented to decorate the person, contribute to the ceremony.

Or, may the bright and active steeds bestowed upon me by Dhvanya, the son of Lakṣmaṇa (bear me); the riches, endowed with greatness, that have been presented, have passed to the dwelling of the seer Saṁvaraṇa, like cows to their stalls.”

Rv. V-34-9

The last *mantra* of this hymn contains an element of *Dānastuti*. The seer Saṁvaraṇa describes that who acquires the favour of Agni for his patron, Śatri, the giver of thousand (gifts), the son of Agniveśa. The eighth *mantra* too in this *Sūkta* is related with *Dānastuti mantra*. The last two *mantras* are as under:<sup>25</sup>

उत त्वे मा पौरुकुत्सस्य सूरेस्त्रसदस्योर्हिरणिनो रराणाः।  
वहन्तु मा दश श्येतासो अस्य गौरीक्षितस्य क्रतुभिर्नु सञ्चे ॥ ८ ॥  
उत त्वे मा मारुताश्वस्य शोणाः क्रत्वामघासो विदथस्य रातौ।  
सहस्रा मे च्यवतानो ददान आनूकमर्यो वपुषे नार्चत् ॥ ९ ॥  
उत त्वे मा ध्वन्यस्य जुष्टा लक्ष्मण्यस्य सुरुचो यतानाः।  
मह्ना राय संवरणस्य ऋषेर्व्रजं न गावः प्रयता अपि ग्मन् ॥ १० ॥

25. Rv. V-34-9

सहस्रसामाग्निवेशिं गृणीषे शत्रिमग्न उपमां केतुमर्यः।  
तस्मा आपः संयतः पीपयन्त तस्मिन्क्षत्रममवत्वेषमस्तु ॥ ९ ॥

“When Indra, the possessor of opulence, discriminates between two men, both wealthy, and exerting themselves (against each other) for the sake of valuable cattle; he takes one of them as his associate, causing (his adversaries) to tremble, and the agitator (of clouds), together with the Maruts, bestows upon him herds of cattle.”

“I Ārya, Agni, praise (king) Śātri, the son of Agniveśa the bestower of thousands, a type for comparison; may the collected waters yield him abundance; may wealth, strength and glory be upon him.”

**Rv. V-36-6**

This also is a small *Dānastuti*. The *mantras* of this hymn are in praise of Indra. The seer Prabhūvasu praises the gifts of two red horses and other three hundred cattle by the young king Śrutaratha.

“Maruts, may all men bow in obedience to that youthful Śrutaratha, the possessor of abundance, who has bestowed upon us to bay steeds accompanied by three hundred cattle.”<sup>26</sup>

**Rv. V-52-17**

The last *mantra* in this hymn consisting of seventeen *mantras*, called *Dānastuti*. The seer Śyāvāśva informs that he has obtained a cow and horse as gifts on the river Yamunā. The former two

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26. यो रोहितौ वाजिनौ वाजिनीवान्निभिः शतैः सचमनावदिष्ट ।

यूने समस्मै क्षितयो नमन्तां श्रुतरथाय मरुतो दुवोया ॥6॥ Rv. V-36-6

*mantras* are closely related with the *Dānastuti*.<sup>27</sup> The Maruts themselves appear here as donor to give over the gifts. This *mantra* describes as below:

“May the seven times seven all-potent Maruts, aggregated as a single troop, bestow upon me hundreds of cattle; may I possess wealth of cows, renowned upon the banks of the Yamunā may I possess wealth of horses.”<sup>28</sup>

#### Rv. V-61-5 to 10

According to *Bṛhaddevatā*, the entire hymn (V-61) is considered to be ‘*Itihāsa Sūkta*’.<sup>29</sup> In this hymn of nineteen *mantras*, fifth to tenth *mantras* refer to *Dānastuti*. The seer Śyāvāśva, in praising Maruts, is referred to a gift of a herd of horses and cattle and hundred sheep etc. He received the gifts from the king Taranta. Also king Purumilha’s gift is referred to in the ninth *mantra*. The *Dānastuti mantras* are as follows;<sup>30</sup>

“She Śaśīyasi, who has thrown her arm round the hero Taranta, who was eulogized by Śyāvāśva, has given me cattle comprising horses, and cows, and hundreds of sheep.

27. Rv. V-52-15,16

नू सन्वान एषां देवाँ अच्छा न वक्षणा ।  
दाना सचेता सूरिभिर्यामश्रुतेभिरज्जिभिः ॥ 15 ॥  
प्र ये मे बन्ध्वेषे गां वोचन्त सूरतः पृश्निं वोचन्त मातरम् ।  
अथा पितरमिष्णिणं रुद्रं शिक्वसः ॥ 16 ॥

28. Rv. V-52-17

सप्त मे सप्त शाकिन एकमेका शता ददुः  
यमुनायामधि श्रुतमुद्राधो गव्यं मृजे नि राधो अश्व्यं मृजे ॥ 17 ॥

29. Story mentioned.

30. Rv. V-61-5 to 10

सनत्साश्व्यं पशुमुत गव्यं शतावयम् ।  
शावाश्वस्तुताय या दोर्वीरायोपबर्बहत् ॥ 5 ॥



Śaśīyasi, though a female, is more excellent than a man who reverences not the gods, nor bestows wealth.

For she discerns one who suffers pain, one who is in want, or one desirous of any thing, and directs her mind towards the gods.

And eulogizing him, I proclaim that the man, her other half is as it were, uncommanded, for he is ever the same in munificent donations.

Yong and affable, she has explained to me, Śyāvasva, the road and two ruddy horses have borne me to the valiant and renowned Purumilha.

Who the son of Vaidadaśva, has given me a hundred of cattle, and like Taranta, many precious gifts."

#### Rv. VI-45-31 to 33

The last three *mantras* of this hymn consisting of thirty-three *mantras* describe *Dānastuti*. The seer Śamyu Bārhaspatya, the son of Bṛhaspati praises Bṛbu who gave one thousand cows as a gift. The former *mantras* praise in honour of Indra. The *mantras* are as follows:<sup>31</sup>

उत त्वा स्त्री शशीयसी पुंसो भवति वस्यसी । आदेवत्रादराधसः॥ 6॥  
 वि या जानाति जसुरिं वि तृष्यन्तं वि कामिनम् । देवत्रा क्रणुते मनः॥ 7॥  
 उत घा नेमो अस्तुतः पुमाँ इति ब्रुवे पणिः । स वैरदेय इत्समः॥ 8॥  
 उत मेऽरपद्युवतिर्ममन्दुषी प्रति श्यावाय वर्तनिम् ।  
 वि रोहिता पुरुमीळ्हाय येमतुर्विप्राय दीर्घयशसे॥ 9॥  
 यो मे धेनूनां शतं वैददश्विर्यथा ददत् । तरन्तइव मंहना॥ 10॥

31. Rv. VI-45-31 to 33

अधि ब्रुबुः पणीनां वर्षिष्टे मूर्धन्नस्थात् ।  
 उरूः कक्षो न गाङ्गयः॥ 31॥

“Bṛbu presided over the high places of the Paṇis, like the elevated bank of the Gaṅgā

Of when, prompt as the wind, the liberal donation of thousands (of cattle) has been quickly given to me soliciting a gift.

Whom, therefore, we all, who are the professor and bestowers of praise ever commend, as the pious Bṛbu, the donor of thousands (of cattle) the receiver of thousands (of laudations).”

#### Observation:

Bṛbu is described as a most generous giver (*sahasra-dātama*) and as at the head of the Paṇis. According to the *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*,<sup>32</sup> seer Bhāradvaja received gifts from Bṛbu Takṣan. The *Anukramaṇī* and *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra* says, he is a Takṣan (carpenter).<sup>33</sup> But considering the fact that Takṣan is not found as an epithet of Bṛbu in the *R̥gveda*. *Manusmṛti*<sup>34</sup> says that he gives many cows to Bhāradvaja who suffered hunger in a desolate forest. Ṣaḍguruśiṣya informs in his commentary on *Anukramaṇī* that Bṛbu Takṣan was a devotee of Indra and a relative of Śamyu. Modern scholar opine: Apparently Bṛbu was a Paṇi, though the words of the *R̥gveda* might be taken to mean that he

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यस्य वायोरिव द्रवद्भद्रा रातिः सहस्राणी ।

सद्यो दानाय मंहते ॥ 32 ॥

तत्सु नो विश्वे अर्य आ सदा गृणन्ति कारवः ।

बृबुं सहस्रदातमं सूरीं सहस्रसातमम् ॥ 33 ॥

32. *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*, XVI-11-11

33. *Anukramaṇī*, VI-45

34. *Manusmṛti*, X-107

भरद्वाजः क्षुदार्तस्तु सुपुत्रो विजने वने ।

बह्वीर्गाः प्रतिजग्राह वृधोस्तक्ष्णो महातपाः ॥

was one who had overthrown them entirely. Griffith holds that Paṇi must here certainly mean a merchant in a good sense, Bṛbu being them a merchant prince.<sup>35</sup>

#### Rv. VI-47-22 to 25

Garga Bhāradvāja is the seer of this hymn. Different kings and priests have been referred to in this hymn. The twenty-second to twenty-fifth *mantras* of this hymn consist of thirty-one *Mantras Dānastuti*.<sup>36</sup>

“Prastoka has given to your worshipper, Indra, ten purses of gold, and ten horses, and we have accepted this treasure from Divodāsa, the spoil won by Atithigva from Śambara.

I have received ten horses, ten purses, clothes and ample food, and ten lumps of gold from Divodāsa.

Aśvatha has given to Pāyu ten chariots with their horses, and a hundred cows to the priests.

The son of Sṛñjaya has revered the Bhāradvāja who have accepted such great wealth for the good of all men. ”

#### Observation :

Here, three kings are mentioned. They are: Prastoka, Divodāsa, Aśvatha. The connection of the *Dānastuti* with the latter

35. Griffith, Vedic index, Vol-I, p.471

36. Rv. VI-47-22 to 25

प्रस्तोक इन्द्र राधसस्त इन्द्र दश कोशयीर्दश वाजिनोऽदात् ।

दिवोदासादतिथिग्वस्य राधः शाम्बरं वसु प्रत्यग्रभीष्म ॥ 22 ॥

दशाश्वान्दश कोशान्दश वस्त्राधिभोजना ।

दशो हिरण्यपिण्डान्दिवोदासादसानिषम् ॥ 23 ॥

दशा रथान्नप्रष्टिमतः शतं गा अथर्वभ्यः । अश्वथः पायवेऽदात् ॥ 24 ॥

महि राधो विश्वजन्यं दधानान्बरद्वाजान्तसार्ज्यो अभ्ययष्ट ॥ 25 ॥

*mantras* is clearly indicated here. The principal event, about which it is alluded to here is the war of king Divodāsa with the robber Varcin and Śambara. The twentieth *mantas* expressly describes the different position of the seer whose cows are robbed. The twenty-first *mantra* presents another imagery.

Here Prastoka also is a generous donor. According to the *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*,<sup>37</sup> Bhāradvāja obtained gifts from Prastoka Sṛnjaya. He is descendant of Sṛñjayas.

The Aśvatha is celebrated in this *Dānastuti* as having given gifts to Pāyu. He is identified with Divodāsa by Griffith,<sup>38</sup> but it is impossible to be certain of this identification.

#### Rv. VI-63-9 and 10

The ninth and tenth *mantras* of this hymn describe *Dānastuti*. The Aśvins are invoked here. Here, seer Bhāradvāja refers to all the gifts which he has received from different kings Puraya, Sumiḷha, Peruka, Śanda and Purupanthan. The *Dānastuti mantras* are as below,<sup>39</sup>

“May the two straight-going, light-moving, (mares) of Puraya be mine; may the hundred cows belonging to Sumiḷha, may Śāṇḍa bestow upon me ten handsome golden chariots, and obedient, valiant, and well-favoured (dependants)

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37. *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*, XVI-11

38. Griffith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.

39. *Rv.* VI-63-9

उत म ऋज्रे पुरयस्य रध्वी सुमीळ्हे शतं पेरुके च पक्वा  
शाण्डो दाद्विरणिनः स्मदिष्टीन्दश वशासो अभिषाच ऋष्वान् ॥ १ ॥

May Purupantha, Nāsatyas, grant to him who praises you, hundreds and thousands of hoes; may he give them, heroes, to Bhāradvāja; achievers of great deeds, may the Rākṣasas be slain.”

#### Rv. VII-18-21 to 25

The eighteenth hymn of the seventh *Maṇḍala* gives a vivid description of the *Dāsarajña* war. Sudāsa king of the Bharatas won victory over ten kings, with the help of Indra. Here, Vasiṣṭha praises the donations received by him from king Sudās after successful completion of the *Yajña*. The twenty-first to twenty-fifth *mantras* of this hymn consisting of twenty-five *mantras* describe *Dānastuti*. The *Dānastuti mantras* are already described.<sup>40</sup>

#### Rv VIII-1-30 to 33

In this hymn the *mantras* from thirty to thirty-three deal with the *Dānastuti*. This hymn is uttered by different seers. viz. Pragātha, Medhyātithi, Plāyogi Āsaṅga, Śaśvati. This hymn dedicates to Indra. According to *Bṛhaddevatā*,<sup>41</sup> his own gift to a seer is paid by king Āsaṅga. The respective *mantras* are as under :

“Praise (me) praise (me), Medhyātithi, for amongst the wealthy we are the most liberal donors of wealth to you; praise (me) as one who out-strips a horse in speed, follows the right path, and bears the best earns;

When with faith I harness the docile horses in the chariot, (praise me) for the descendant of Yadu, possessed of cattle, know how to distribute desirable riches.

40. Rv. VII-18-21 to 25

41. *Bṛhaddevatā*, VI-41

स्त्रियं सन्तं पुमांसं तम् आसङ्गं कृतवानृषिः।

स्वस्य दानं स्तुहीत्याग्निश् चतुर्भिः परिकीर्तितम्॥

(Praise me, saying), "He who has presented riches to me with a golden purse; may this rattling chariot of Āsaṅga carry of all the treasures (of enemy).

(So praise me, saying) "Āsaṅga, the son of Plāyoga, has given more than others, Agni by tens of thousands; ten times (number of) vigorous and brilliant oxen (given by him) to me, issue forth like the reeds of the lake."<sup>42</sup>

#### Observation :

The *Anukramaṇī* poses a doubt whether those *mantras* as *Dānastuti* or not. In this connection a narration is referred to in the *Anukramaṇī*. "Āsaṅga was the son of Plāyoga, who having become a woman afterwards became a man. After he had giving gift to Medhyātithi he praised himself with last four *mantras* beginning with word 'Stuhi'."<sup>43</sup> His father was Plāyoga. His wife Śaśvati. Svanadratha is considered as the son of Āsaṅga. But Macdonell and Keith says 'misunderstanding of *Dānastuti* gives him a son Svanadratha, really a mere epithet, and makes him a descendant Yadu'.<sup>44</sup>

42. *Rv.* VIII-1-30 to 33

स्तुहि स्तुहिदेते घा ते मंहिष्टासो मघोनाम्।  
निन्दिताश्वः प्रपथी परमज्या मघस्य मेध्यातिथे ॥ 30 ॥  
आ यदश्वान्वनन्वतः श्रद्धयाहं रथे रुहम्।  
उत वामस्य वसुनश्चिक्रेतति यो अस्ति याद्वः पशुः ॥ 31 ॥  
य ऋज्रा मह्यं मामहे सह त्वचा हिरण्यया।  
एष विश्वान्यभ्यस्तु सौभगासङ्गस्य स्वनद्रथः ॥ 32 ॥  
अथ प्लायोगिरति दासदन्यानासङ्गो अग्ने दशभिः सहस्रैः।  
अधोक्षणो दश मह्यं रुशन्तो नळाइव सरसो निरतिष्ठन् ॥ 33 ॥

43. प्लायोगिश्चासङ्गो यः स्त्री भूत्वा पुमानभूत् स मेध्यातिथये दानं दत्त्वा स्तुहि स्तुहीति चतसृभिरात्मनि तुष्टाव ॥ *Anukramaṇī*,

44. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol. 1, p.70

### Rv. VIII-2-41 and 42

Last two *mantras* in this hymn refer to *Dānastuti*. Here, the seer Medhyātithi praises the gift of Vibhindhu, king of Kāśi. The *Dānastuti mantras* are as below:<sup>45</sup>

“Liberal Vibhindu, you have given to me four times ten thousand, and afterwards eight thousand.

I glorify those two (heaven and earth), the augmenters of water, the originators (of beings), the benefactors of the worshipper, on account of their generation (of the wealth so given to me).”

### Rv. VIII-3-21 to 24

The hymn is in the honour of Indra. Medhyātithi is the seer of it. The last four *mantras* of the hymn contain *Dānastuti* of king Pākasthāman, the son of Kuruyāṇa. The gifts are mentioned as below:<sup>46</sup>

“Such wealth as Indra and the Maruts have bestowed upon me, such has Pākasthāman, the son of Kurayāṇa, bestowed, of itself the most magnificent of all, like quick-moving (sun) in the sky.

Pākasthāman has given me a tawny robust beast of burden, the means of acquiring riches.

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45. Rv VIII-2-41 and 42

शिक्षा विभिन्दो अस्मै चत्वार्ययुता ददत् । अष्टा परः सहस्रा ॥ 41 ॥  
उत सु त्वे पयोवृद्धा माकी रणस्य नस्या । जनित्वनाय मामहे ॥ 42 ॥

46. Rv. VIII-3-21 to 24

यं मे दुरीन्द्रो मरुतः पाकस्थाम कौरयाणः । विश्वेषां त्मना शोभिष्ठमपेव दिवि धावमानम् ॥ 21 ॥  
रोहितं मे पाकस्थामा सुधुरं कक्ष्यप्राम् अदाद् रायो विबोधनम् ॥ 22 ॥  
यस्मा अन्ये दश प्रति धुरं वहन्ति वह्नयः । अस्तं वयो न तुग्र्यम् ॥ 23 ॥  
आत्मा पितुस्तनूर्वास ओजोदा अभ्यञ्जनम् ।  
तुरीयमिद् रोहितस्य पाकस्थामानं भोजं दातारमब्रवम् ॥ 24 ॥

Whose burden to other bearers (of loads) would he required to convey, such as were the steeds that bore Bhujyu home.

His father's own son, the giver of dwellings, the sustainer of strength like (invigorating) unguents, I celebrate Pākasthāman, the destroyer (of foes), the despoiler (of enemies), the donor of the tawny (horse)."

#### Rv. VIII-4-19 to 21

The praise made by the seer Devātithi from the Kaṇva family forms this hymn. He praises in the hymn the gods Indra and Pūṣan. The last three *mantras* refer to the gifts of the king Kuraṅga at the 'Dviṣṭi-Yajña.' Kuraṅga may be said to have belonged to the Turvaśa-family, since in these *mantras* clearly mention Turvaśas. The *Dānastuti mantras* are as follows:<sup>47</sup>

"We acknowledge the substantial wealth (of the gift) of hundred horses, the donation made to us amongst men at the holy solemnities of the illustrious and auspicious king Kuraṅga.

I, the seer (Devātithi) have received subsequently the complete donation; the sixty thousand herds of pure cattle merited by the devotions of the pious son of Kaṇva, and by the illustrious Priyamedhas.

On the acceptance of this donation to me, the very trees have exclaimed; (see these seers) have acquired excellent cows, excellent horses."

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47. Rv. VIII-4-19 to 21

स्थूरं राधः शताश्वं कुरुङ्गस्य दिविष्टिषु ।

राज्ञस्त्वेषस्य सुभगस्व रातिषु तुर्वशेष्वमन्महि ॥ 19 ॥

धीभिः सातानि काण्वस्य वाजिनः प्रियमेधैरभिद्युभिः ।

षष्टिं सहस्रानु निर्मजामजे निर्यूथानि गवामृषिः ॥ 20 ॥

वृक्षाश्चिन्मे अभिपित्वे अरारणुः । गां भजन्त मेहनाऽश्वं भजन्त मेहना ॥ 21 ॥



**Rv. VIII-5-37 to 39**

In this hymn, seer Brahmātithi of Kaṇva family praises to Aśvins. According to the *Bṛhaddevatā*, it is a *Dānastuti* of King Kaśu.<sup>48</sup> The concluding three *mantras* refer to *Dānastutis*.<sup>49</sup>

“Become apprised, Aśvins, of my recent gifts, how that the Kaśu, the son of Cedi, has presented me with a hundred camels and ten thousand cows.

The son of Cedi, who has given me for servants ten kings, bright as gold, for all men are beneath his feet; all those around him wear cuirasses of leather.

No one proceeds by that path which the Cedis follow, no other pious man as a mere liberal benefactor contends (favour on those who praise-him).”

**Observation :**

The seer Brahmātithi received the gifts from the Cedi people and their king Kaśu. In this hymn, he is mentioned with the patronymic Caidya or descendant of Cedi.

48. *Bṛhaddevatā*, VI-45

दूरादित्याश्विने सूक्ते सप्तत्रिंशत्तमी यथा ।

इत्यर्धर्चो दृचश्वान्त्यः कशोर्दानस्तुतिः स्मृता ॥

49. *Rv.* VIII-5-37 to 39

ता मे अश्विना सनीनां विद्यातं नवानाम् ।

यथा चिच्चैद्यः कशुः शतमुष्टानां ददत् सहस्रा दश गोनाम् ॥ 37 ॥

यो मे हिरण्यसंदृशो दश राज्ञो अमंहत ।

अधस्पदा इच्चैध्यस्य कृष्टयश्चर्मणा अभितो जनाः ॥ 38 ॥

माकिरेना पथा गाद्येनेमे यन्ति चेदयः । अन्यो नेत्सूरिरोहते भूरिदावत्तरो जनः ॥ 39 ॥

### Rv.VIII-6-46 to 48

In this hymn, seer Vatsa Kāṇva, praising Indra and last three *mantras* refer to *Dānastutis*.<sup>50</sup>

“I have accepted from Tirindira, the son of Parśu, hundreds and thousands of the treasures of men.

(These princes) have given to the Chauter, Pajra three hundred horses, ten thousand cattle.

The exalted (prince) has been raised by fame to haven, for he has given camels laden with four (loads of gold) and Yādava people.”

#### Observation :

In the ninth *mantra* of this hymn, the seer says - “o Indra ! may we obtain the riches consisting of cows and horses.”<sup>51</sup> The seer, Vatsa Kāṇva received the gifts from Paraśu and Tirindra. They were associated with the Yadus. In the *Śārikhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*<sup>52</sup> this statement is represented by a tale that the Kāṇva Vatsa obtained a gift from Tirindra Pārasavya. Here, Tirindra and Paraśu treated as identical.

The opinions of modern scholars in this connection are: “Lundwig sees in the R̥gvedic passage a proof that the Yadus had gained a victory over Tirindira, and gave a part of the booty to the

50. Rv. VIII-6-46 to 48

शतमहं तिरिन्दिरे सहस्रं पश्वा ददे । राधांसि याद्वानाम् ॥ 46 ॥

त्रीणि शतान्यर्वतां सहस्रा दश गोनाम् । दुदुष्पजाय साम्ने ॥ 47 ॥

उदानद्वं कुहो दिवमुष्ट्राञ्चतुर्युजो ददत् । श्रवसा याद्वं जनम् ॥ 48 ॥

51. Rv. VIII-6-9

प्र तमिन्द्र नशीमही रयिं गोमन्तमश्विनाम् ।

52. *Śārikhāyana Śrautasūtra*, XVI-11-20

singers; but there is no proof whatever of the correctness of this interpretation, which Zimmer shows to be most unlikely. Yadu princes must be meant by Tirindira and Paraśu, though Weber thinks that the singers were Yadus, not the princes.”<sup>53</sup>

#### **Rv. VIII-19-36 and 37**

In this hymn, seer Sobhari praises to Agni and Ādityas. Here, last two *mantras* refer to *Dānastuti*.<sup>54</sup>

“The magnificent lord, the protector of the virtuous, Trasadasyu, the son of Purukutsa, has given me five hundred brides.

The affluent Śyāva, the lord of the cows, has given to me upon the banks of the Suvāstu a present of three times seventy three (cows).”

#### **Observation :**

The seer Sobhari is praising the gift from Trasadasyu the son of Purukutsa, one of the famous kings in the *Rgveda*. The donor Trasadasyu is already mentioned in the thirty-second *mantra* of this hymn.<sup>55</sup> The last *mantra* refers to the gift from Śyāva belonging to the area covered by bank of the river Suvāstu.

53. Macdoness and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.I, p.310

54. *Rv.* VIII-19 - 36 to 37

आदान्मे पौरुकुत्स्यः पञ्चाशतं त्रसदस्युर्वधूनाम् । मंहिष्टो अर्यः सत्पतिः ॥ 36 ॥

उत मे प्रयियोर्वयियोः सुवास्त्वा अधि तुग्वनि ।

तिसृणां सप्ततीनां श्यावः प्रणेता भुवद्वसुर्दियानां पतिः ॥ 37 ॥

55 *Rv.* VIII-19-32

तमागन्म सोभरयः सहस्रमुष्कं स्वभिष्टिमवसे ।

साम्राजं त्रसदस्यवम् ॥

### Rv. VIII-21-17 and 18

The seer of this hymn is Sobhari Kāṇva. This hymn dedicates to Indra. The last two *mantras* of this hymn refer to *Dānastuti*.<sup>56</sup>

“Is it Indra who has given to the donor of the oblation so much affluence ? Is it the auspicious Sarasvatī who has given the treasure? or Citra, is it you.

Verily the king Citra, giving his thousands and ten of thousands, has overspread with his bounty those other petty princes, who rule along the Sarasvatī, as Parjanya (overspreads the earth) with rain.”

#### Observation :

These *mantras* describe the gift from the prince Citra, who lived on the banks of the river Sarasvatī.<sup>57</sup> There is an allusion to king Citra, mentioned in the first *mantra* of this hymn. The legend in the *Bṛhaddevatā*<sup>58</sup> attributes this panegyric to Sobhari and describes Citra as king of the rats.

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56. Rv. VIII-21-17-18

इन्द्रो वा घेदियन्मघं सरस्वती वा सुभगा ददिर्वसु । त्वं वा चित्र दाशुषे ॥ 17 ॥  
चित्र इद्राजा राजका इदन्यके यके सरस्वतीमनु ।  
पर्जन्य इव ततनद्धि वृष्ट्या सहस्रमयुता ददत् ॥ 18 ॥

57. Sāyaṇa on Rv. VIII-21-17

अत्र चित्रस्य दानं स्तौति । चित्रो नाम राजा सरस्वती तीरे इन्द्रार्थं यागमकृत ।  
तत्र मंत्रदृष्टिर्भुधन लाभान्मह्यमेतावदनं को वा प्रायच्छदिति विकल्पयते ॥

58. *Bṛhaddevatā*, VII-60

असुराजोऽभिमानाच्च प्रहर्षितमनाः स्वयम् ।  
संस्तुते देववच्चित्र ऋषये तु गवां ददौ ॥

### Rv. VIII-24-28 to 30

Here, seer Viśvāmana Vaiyaśva praises Indra. The last three *mantras* in this hymn contain *Dānastutis*.<sup>59</sup>

“As you, Varu, have distributed vast wealth to those who have solicited (riches) on behalf of Suṣaman, so do you now distribute to the descendants of Vyaśva; and so too you, auspicious food-bestowing Uṣas.

May the gifts of a human price, when offering the Soma libation extend to the Vyaśva and substantial wealth by hundreds and thousand.

If anybody asks of you, (Uṣas), when anywhere present, where the sacrificer Varu dwells, reply the powerful prince, the refuge of all, abides on the banks of the Gomatī river.”

### Observation :

The king Varo Suṣoman is the donor of seer Viśvamana Vaiyāśva. In the twenty-ninth *mantras* of this hymn, another name Nārya is mentioned. Sāyaṇa takes this word to mean ‘leader’ and opines, that it may be possible that Nārya would be identical with the same Varo-Suṣoman.<sup>60</sup>

### Rv.VIII-25-22- to 24

The seer Viśvamana Vaiyāśva praises Mitra-Varuṇa in this hymn. The three *mantras* here present *Dānastuti*.<sup>61</sup>

59. Rv. VIII-24-28 to 30

यथा वरो सुषाम्णे सनिभ्य आवहो रयिम् । व्यश्वेभ्यः सुभगे वाजिनीवति ॥ 28 ॥

आ नार्यस्य दक्षिणा व्यश्वौ एतु सोमिनः । स्थूरं च राधः शतवत्सहस्रवत् ॥ 29 ॥

यत्त्वा पृच्छादीजानः कुहया कुहयाकृते । एषो अपश्रितो वलो गोमतीमव तिष्ठति ॥ 30 ॥

60. Sāyaṇa on Rv. VIII-24-29

61. Rv. VIII-25-22 to 24

ऋज्रमुक्षण्यायने रजतं हरयाणे । रथं युक्तमसनाम सुषामणि ॥ 22 ॥

“We have received from the son of Suṣāman, the descendant of Ukṣan, the overcomer of foes, a well going chariot of silver, yoked with a pair of horses.

Among bay horses these two are pre-eminently the destroyers of foes, and of those eager in combat; the strong bearers men.

Through this new praise of Mitra and Varuṇa, I have obtained at the same moment of the mighty price, two fast-going sagacious, steeds, with whip and reins. ”

#### Observation :

This *Dānastuti* describes that seer Viśvamana received the gifts from Ukṣaṇyāyana, Harayāṇa, and Suṣāman. Ukṣaṇyāyana and Harayāṇa, who are referred to as patrons by the side of Suṣoman are different persons. Ludwig thinks that all three are identical.<sup>62</sup> Sāyaṇa says: “An ancestor of Varu is called Ukṣan whose descendent is Ukṣaṇyāyana. Sāyaṇa even takes Harayāṇa as an adjective of Suṣāman.”<sup>63</sup>

#### Ṛv.VIII-46-21 to 24

The hymn praises Indra and Vayu by the seer Vaśa Āśvya. Here, many *mantras* are devoted to the *Dānastuti*. The *Bṛhaddevatā* and *Anukramaṇī* mention that the *mantras* twenty-first to

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ता मे अश्व्यानां हरीणां नितोशना । उतो नु कृत्व्यानां नृवाहसा ॥ 23 ॥

स्मदभीशु कशावन्ता विप्रा नविष्ठया मती । महो वाजिनावर्वन्ता सचासनम् ॥ 24 ॥

62. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.II, p.460

63. Sāyaṇa on Ṛv. VIII-25-22

अक्षनाम कश्चिद्वरोः पूर्वजः । तस्य गोत्रापत्य उक्षण्शब्दाण्यः ।

तस्य गोत्रापत्ये हरयाणे शत्रुजीवीतैश्वर्यादिहरणशीलयान एतादृशे सुषामणी ॥

twenty-fourth represent *Dānastuti*.<sup>64</sup> The *Dānastuti mantras* are as below :<sup>65</sup>

“Let him draw near, who though not a god, would receive this complete living gift - since Vaśa, the son of Aśva, receives it at the dawn of this morning at the hands of Pṛthuśravas, the son of Kāṇiṭa.

I have received sixty thousand horses, and tens of thousands; a score of hundreds of camels, - a thousand brown mares, - and ten times ten thousand cows with three red paths.

Ten brown horses bear along the wheel of my chariot, of mature vigour, of complete power, and the trampling down obstacles.

These are the gifts of the wealthy Pṛthuśravas the son of Kāṇiṭa; he bestowing a golden chariot, has proved himself most liberal and wise, he has won most abundant fame.”

#### Observation:

Here, the king Pṛthuśravas, the son of Kāṇiṭa is said to have given the fanciful gifts. The seer of this hymn, Vaśa the son of Aśva is mentioned in the twenty first *mantra*, as receiver of gifts. In this connection *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra* refers to the episode.<sup>66</sup>

64. *Bṛhaddevatā*, VI 79,80

65. *Rv.* VIII-46-21 to 24

अ स एतु य इवदौ अदेवः पूर्तमाददे।

यथा चिद्वशो अश्व्यः पृथुश्रवसि कानीतेऽस्या व्युष्याददे ॥ 21 ॥

षष्टिं सहस्राश्व्यस्यायुतासनमुष्टानां विंशतिं शता।

दश श्यावीनां शता दश ऋषीणां दश गवां सहस्रा ॥ 22 ॥

दश श्यावा ऋधद्रयो वीतवारास आशवः। मथा नेमी नि वावृतुः ॥ 23 ॥

दानासः प्रथुश्रवसः कानीतस्य सुराधसः।

रथं हिरण्यं ददन्महिष्टः सूरिरभूद्वर्षिष्ठमकृत श्रवः ॥ 24 ॥

66. *Śāṅkhāyana Śrautasūtra*, XVI-11-13

In the thirty-second *mantra*, king Dāsa Balbutha and Tarukṣa are described as donors of a gift of hundred. They are Dāsa kings. “Roth was inclined to amend the text so as to say that the singer received a hundred Dāsas from Balbutha. Zimmer’s suggestion that he may have been the son of an aborigin mother, or perhaps an aboriginal himself. If this was the case, it would be a clear piece of evidence for the establishment of friendly relations between the Aryans and the Dāsas.”<sup>67</sup> It may be possible that many Ārya kings and the Dāsas were the associates of the king of Pṛthuśravas.

#### **Rv. VIII-55 and 56**

In the Kaṇva *Maṇḍala*, there are two hymns called *Vālahilya Sūktas* belonging to two different seers viz. Kṛśa and Prasadra of the Kaṇva family. These two hymns are identified as *Dānastuties*.<sup>68</sup>

“We know the works of Indra as various; he is a bull unto the Dasyus, his wealth is coming to us.

As the stars shining in the sky so hundreds of bulls are looking beautiful thus beautifying the heaven with their grandeur.

Praskaṇva gave me one hundred sticks, one hundred dogs, hides, fodder and four hundred cows.

Sons of Kaṇvas, traversing the sky like birds, you are mightily wandering like horses.”

67. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.II, p.64

68. Rv. VIII-55 and 56

भूरिदिन्द्रस्य वीर्यं व्यख्यमभ्यायति । राधस्ते दस्यवे वृक ॥ 1 ॥

शतं श्वेतास उक्षणो दिवि तारो न रोचन्ते । मद्वा दिवं न तस्तभुः ॥ 2 ॥

शतं वेणूञ्छतं शुनः शतं चर्माणि म्लातानि । शतं मे बल्बजस्तुका अरूषीणां चतुःशतम् ॥ 3 ॥

सुदेवाः स्थ काण्वायना वयोवयो विचरन्तः । अश्वासो न चङ्क्रमत ॥ 4 ॥

आदिताप्तस्य चर्किरन्नानूनस्य महि श्रवः । श्यावीरतिध्वसन्पथश्चक्षुषा च न संनशे ॥ 5 ॥



Let the seven yolk team be praised. The young lives are of mighty strength. The deep ground makes go galloping baffling the idle fellow.

#### Rv.VIII-56

“You are a bull to the Dasyus, your inexhaustible wealth has been perceived. Your forces spread to the heaven.

You are a bull to the Dasyus, give me ten thousand from your permanent wealth.

Give me one hundred asses, one hundred worthy sheep and one hundred slaves.

To the Pūtakṛata has been brought mare, well-crested one unlike any in the herd.

Agni who has appeared, is wise and has beautiful chariot and carries sacrifices. He is moving with white and brilliant rays, he is looking irate; he appears in the heaven like Sūrya.”

#### Observation :

According to the *Bṛhaddevatā* and *Anukramanī*,<sup>69</sup> these two hymns consider the *Dānastuti* of Praskaṇva. Here, king Dasyavevṛka is praised. He was son of Pūtakṛatu and his wife Pūtakṛata. In one hymn he is called a Ṛṣi. But in two hymns above, he is clearly said as prince victorious over the Dasyus, and a generous patron

Rv. VIII-56

प्रति ते दस्यवेवृक राधो अदृश्यह्यम् । द्यौर्न प्रथिना शवः ॥ 1 ॥

दश मह्यं पौतक्रतः सहस्रा दस्यवे वृकः । नित्याद्रायो अमंहत ॥ 2 ॥

शतं मे गर्दभानां शतमूर्णावतीनाम् । शतं दासौ अति स्वजः ॥ 3 ॥

तत्रो अपि प्राणीयत पूतकृतायै व्यक्ता । अश्वानामिन्न यूथ्याम् ॥ 4 ॥

अचेत्यग्निश्चिकितुर्हव्यवाद् स समुद्रथः ।

अग्निः शुक्रेण शोचिषा बृहत्सूरो अरोचत दिवि सूर्यो अरोचत ॥ 5 ॥

69. *Bṛhaddevatā*, VI 85-86

of the singer. The name of the Dasyavevṛka (wolf to the dasyu) would indicate that it was a memorable victory over the Dasyus.

#### Rv. VIII-68-14 to 19

This hymn is in praise of the god Indra. Priyamedha Āṅgīrasa is the seer of this hymn. According to *Bṛhaddevatā*, only fifteen to nineteen *mantras* relate to *Dānastuti*, but fourteenth *mantra* praises the seasons (ṛtu). The *Anukramaṇī* does not mention about the *ṛtus* in this *mantra*, but includes this in the *Dānastutis*. The *Dānastutis* are as under: <sup>70</sup>

“Six princes come to me in pairs, hearing pleasant gifts, in the exhilaration of the Soma.

I receive two straight going steeds from Indrota, two bay from the son of Ṛkṣa, two roan from the son of Aśvamedha.

I receive two steeds with excellent chariot from the son of Atithigva, two with excellent reins from the son of Ṛkṣa, two with excellent ornaments from the son of Aśvamedha.

I have received together with my other gifts six horses with their mores from the pious Indrota, the son of Atithigva.

Among these straight-going steeds are numbered a mature roan more with excellent reins and whip.

#### 70. Rv. VIII-68-14 to 19

उप मा षड् द्वाद्वा नरः सोमस्य हर्ष्या । तिष्ठन्ति स्वादुरातयः॥ 14॥  
 ऋज्राविन्द्रोत आ ददे हरी ऋक्षस्य सूनवि । आश्वमेधस्य रोहिता॥ 15॥  
 सुरथाँ आतिथिग्वे स्वभीशूँराक्षे । आश्वमेधे सुपेशसः॥ 16॥  
 षळश्वौ आतिथिग्व इन्द्रोते वधूमतः । सचा पूतक्रतौ सनम्॥ 17॥  
 ऐषु चेतद्वषण्वत्यन्तऋज्रेष्वरुषी । स्वभीशुः कशावती॥ 18॥  
 न युष्मे वाजबन्धवो निनित्सुश्चन मर्त्यः । अवद्यमधि दीधरत्॥ 19॥

O princes, givers of food, even the lover of calumny has thrown no censure on you.”

**Observation :**

Priyamedha of the Āṅgīrasa family is said to have received gifts from king Ṛkṣa and his son Aśvamedha, and as also from king Atithigva and his son Indrota. We have not much information about these patrons in the *Ṛgveda*.

**Rv. VIII-70-13 to 15**

This hymn is in praise of Indra by Puruhanma of Āṅgīrasa family. Here, it is said, Śara the son of Śūradeva gave as a gift of only a calf to the ‘three seers’ This *Dānastuti* ironically mentioned in the *Ṛgveda* is as below:<sup>71</sup>

“He who directs towards the worshipper his well-yoked prancing steeds,-he (Indra), the swift bearer of blessing, (produces) rain, - he, who being comparable only to himself is delivered from all his enemies.

Śakra verily overpowers; Indra, over powers all his enemies; he worthy of love, abiding beyond, cleaves the cloud smitten by his thunder-voice.

Indra, like a young boy, has mounted his splendid chariot; he makes ready for his father and mother the great deer-like many functioned cloud.”

71. Rv. VIII-70-13 to 15

सखायः कृतुमिच्छत कथा राधाम शरस्य । उपस्तुतिं भोजः सूरियो अहयः॥ 13॥

भूरिभिः समह ऋषिभिर्बर्हिष्मद्भिः स्तविष्यसे । यदित्थमेकमेकमिच्छर वत्सान्पराददः॥ 14॥

कर्णगृह्य मघवा शौरदेव्यो वत्सं नस्त्रिभ्य आनयत् । अजां सूरिर्न धातवे॥ 15॥

### Rv. VIII-74-13 to 15

This hymn is in praise of Agni. Gopavana is seer of this hymn. The *Anukramaṇī* takes these *mantras* as *Dānastutis*, but the *Bṛhaddevatā* <sup>72</sup> considers only thirteenth and fourteen *mantras* as *Dānastutis*. Those *mantras* are as below:<sup>73</sup>

“Summoned before, Śrutarvan, the son of Ṛkṣa, the number of the pride of his enemies, I stroke with my hand the heads of the four horses which he has given to me, as men stroke the long wool of rams.

Four swift horses of that most mighty king, yoked to a splendid car, bear me forth to seize the substance of my enemies, as ships bore home the son of Tugra.

Verily I address you, O great river Paruṣṇī, ; O waters, there is no mortal who gives horses more liberally than this most mighty monarch.”

#### Observation :

In this hymn, king Śrutarvan is referred to in the fourth *mantra*. Gopavana of the Atri family is referred to as receiver of a gift from king Śrutarvan, the son of Ṛkṣa. He lived on the banks of Paruṣṇī. He is concerned with his war over Mṛgya.

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72. *Bṛhaddevatā*, VI-95

आत्मनमात्मना स्तुत्वा स्तौति दानं श्रुतवर्णः॥

73. *Rv.* VIII-74-13 to 15

अहं हुवान आर्क्षे श्रुतपर्वणि मदच्युति। शर्धासीव स्तुकाविनां मृक्षा शीर्षा चतुर्णाम्॥ 13॥

मां चत्वार आशवः शविष्टस्य द्रविलवः। सुराथासो अभि प्रयो वक्षन्वयो न तुग्रम्॥ 14॥

सत्यमित्वा महेनदि परुष्यव देदिशम्। नेमापो अश्वदातारः शविष्ठादस्ति मर्त्यः॥ 15॥

### Rv. X-33-4 and 5

This hymn uttered by seer Kavaśa. The fourth and fifth *mantras* contain a *Dānastuti* of Kuruśravaṇa, who is said to be giving gifts in thousands. He is son of Upamaśravas, and his father Mitrātithi.<sup>74</sup>

He is alluded to as dead in this hymn. In another hymn he is mentioned as still alive. His name connects on the one hand with the Kurus, and on the other with Trasadasyu and the Purus.

“I, the Ṛṣi, solicit wealth of the munificent prince Kuruśravaṇa, the son of Trasadasyu, for the priests.

Whose three horses bear me pleasantly in the chariot; I praise him at the ceremony in which he presents thousands.”

In this manner the *Dānastuti* hymns in the *Ṛgveda* refer to the names of the kings, their clans, the details of their gifts, the names of the seers who received the gifts therefrom etc; therefore these hymns have been recognised as *Dānastutis*. Reading between the lines of these hymns, gives an understanding that the act of giving gifts was considered as a pious and beneficial act of Ṛgvedic people. This practice has been continued through ages among the traditionals uptill today.

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74. Rv. X-33-4 and 5

कुरुश्रवणमावृणी राजानं त्रासदस्यवम् । मंहिष्ठं वाघतामृषिः ॥ 4 ॥  
यस्य मा हरितो रथे तिस्रो वहन्ति साधुया । स्तवै सहस्रदक्षिणे ॥ 5 ॥

List of Dānastutis

Rgvedic mantras	The Bṛhaddevatā of Śaunaka	Anukramanīs	Seer of the Dānastutis	Royal Donor	Dakṣiṇas (gifts)
I-100-16, 17	-	-			
I-122-7 to 15					
I-125	III-140	I-125	Kakṣivān	Syanaya Bhāvayavya	
I-126	-	-	Kakṣivān	Syanaya Bhāvayavya	Hundred dark-brown horses, fort, red horses, ten chariots, a heard, one thousand sixty cows.
IV-15-7 to 10	-	-	Vāmadeva Goutama	Somaka Sāhadeva	Two horses.
IV-32-19 to 24	-	-	Vāmadeva Goutama	-	Ten Jars with gold, two mars.
V-18-5	-	-	Dvita Mṛtavāha Ātreya	-	Fifty horses
V-27	-	-	-	Trayāruṇa Asvamedha	Two cows, carts, two cloths etc. Hundred bulls
V-30-12 to 15	-	-	Babru Ātreya	Raṇācaya	Four thousand cows
V-33-7 to 10	-	-	Samvaruna	Trasadasyu Vidatha	Ten horses Thousands of treasure
V-34-9	-	-	Samvaruna	Śatri	Thousands of gifts ?
V-36-6	-	-	Prabhūvasu	Śrutaratha	Two horses, three hundred cattle.
V-52-17	-	-	Śyāvāsva Ātreya	-	Hundred cows
V-61-5 to 10	-	-	Śyāvāsva Ātreya	Taranta Purumilha	Horses, cattle, hundred sheeps, hundred cows.
VI-27-8	V-141(B)	VI-27-8	Bharadvāja	Abhyāvartī Cāyamāna	Two horses with chariot twenty cows.
V-45-31 to 33	-	-	Samyu Bāṛhsptya	Bṛbustakṣā	Thousand cows
VI-47-22 to 25	-	VI-47-22 to 25	Garga Bhāradvāja	Prastoka Divodāsa	Ten jars of gold, ten horses
VI-63-9 to 10	-	-	Bhāradvāja	Puraya Sumilha Sāṇḍa Purupantha	Two mares Hundred cows Horses, ten cows Hundred thousand horses

VII-18 – 21 to 25	V-162 (b)-163(a)	VII-18-22 to 25	Vasiṣṭha	Sudāsa	Two hundred cows, two chariot, women, four horses.
VIII-1-30 to 33	VI-41(b)	VIII-1-30 to 33	Medhyāṭithi, Pragātha, etc.	Svanadratha	Two horses
VIII-2-41, 42	VI-42	VIII-2-41, 42	Medhyāṭithi	Asaṅga	Ten thousand cows
VIII-3-21 to 24	VI-42	VIII-3-21 to 24	Medhyāṭithi	Vibhindhū	Forty eight thousand cows
VIII-4-19 to 24	VI-44	VIII-4-19 to 21	Devātithi Kāṇva	Pākasthāman	Ten horses
VIII-5-37 to 39	VI-45	VIII-5-37 to 39	Brahmatithi Kāṇva	Kuraṅga	Hundred horses, sixty thousand cows.
VIII-6-46 to 48	VI-47 (ab)	VIII-6-46 to 48	Vatsa Kāṇva	Kaśu Caidya	Hundred Camels, Thousand cows
VIII-19-36, 37	-	VIII-19-36, 37	Sobhari Kāṇva	Tirindira	Hundred cows,
VIII-21-17, 18	VI-59 (cd), 62 (c)	VIII-21-17, 18	Sobhari Kāṇva	Parśu	Thousand cows,
VIII-24-28 to 30	-	-	Viśvamaṇa Vaiyaśva	Yādavas	Pious gifts,
VIII-25-22 to 24	VI-66	-	Viśvamaṇa Vaiyaśva	Pajra Sāman	Three hundred horses, Thousand cows
VIII-34-16 to 18	-	-	Vasuroci Viśvamaṇa Vaiyaśva	Trasadasyu	Five hundred brides
VIII-46-21 to 33	VI-79, 80	VIII-46-21 to 28	Vasā Aśvya	Śyāva	Three times seventy three cows
				Citra	Thousands (of gifts)
				Varu	Hundreds & thousands (of wealth)
				Ukṣaṇyāyana	White horse
				Harayāṇa	White horse
				Suśāman	Chariot of silver
					Yoked chariot, reins, whip
					Thousands cows, horse, chariot
				Pṛthuvras	Sixty thousand horses, and hundreds of camels, thousands brown mares, ten times, ten thousand cows etc.
				Śvitna	Sixty thousand horses, hundred camels, thousand cows
				Dāsa Bālbūta Tarukṣa	Hundred cows

VIII-55	VI-85, 86	VIII-55- 1 to 4	Kraśa Kāṇva	Dasyavevṛka	Hundred bulls, hundred dogs, hundred sheep, four hundred red cows, a dark brown mare,
VIII-56	-	VIII-56- 1 to 4	Prasadhra Kāṇva	Dasyavevṛka	Thousand cows, hundred asses, hundred wooly sheep etc.
VIII-65-10 to 12	-	-	Pragātha Kāṇva	The grand son of Durgaha (?)	Thousand cows
VIII-68-14 to 19	VI-92	VIII-68-14 to 19	Priyamedha Āngirasa	Indrota	Two white horses, chariots, six horses etc.
VIII-70-13 to 15	-	-	Puruhanma	Sara	A Calf
VIII-74-13 to 15	VI-95 (b)	VIII-74-13 to 15	Gopavana	Śtarvān	Four horses
X-33-4, 5	-	X-33-4, 5	Kavaśa	Kuruśravana	Three horses, chariot, thousands of (gifts)
X-62-8 to 11	-	X-62-8 to 11	Nābhānediāṣṭa	Yadu, Turvśa	Large number of cows , Two servants
X-93-14, 15	VIII-147	-	Tānva Pārthya	Duḥśīma, Prṭh vāna Venā Rāma	Five hundred cows Seventy seven cows



## 6. Ṛgvedic Ākhyānas

The *ākhyānas* in the Vedas are the foundation for a history of human values. The *Nirukta* and the *Bṛhaddevatā* trace *itihāsa* and *ākhyāna* to the *Ṛgveda*. They explain some Ṛgvedic hymns to be mixtures of *mantra*, *gāthā*; *itihāsa*, while three hymns at least are described as *itihāsa-sūktas*. *Itihāsa* as a work of historical nature is mentioned by *Atharvaveda* and the *Brāhmaṇas*, where it means ancient event (*Pūrāvṛtta*). The *Nirukta* and *Bṛhaddevatā* refer to *itihāsa* in this sense. *Itihāsa* is usually coupled with *Purāṇa* which means ancient lore. The *Atharvaveda*, the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, the *Bṛhadaranyaka Upaniṣad*, the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* and the *Āsvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra* mention *itihāsa-purāṇa* immediately after the four Vedas and sometimes, *itihāsa* is glorified with the title of Veda. Again, the house-holder's list of works for daily recitation includes *itihāsa-Purāṇa*. During the *Āśvamedha* sacrifice, the *itihāsa-purāṇas* were to be recited on the eighth and ninth days of the ten-day cycle of recurring revolving narration of *ākhyānas*.

Many *ākhyānas* of war between gods and demons are found in the Brahmana literature. Ten *ākhyānas* were to be repeated in a cycle throughout the year when the sacrificial horse roamed at large. The *Brāhmaṇa* literature as well as the *Nirukta* mention the existence of literary men who specialised in *ākhyāna* literature. Though *ākhyāna* was distinguished from *itihāsa* by both *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and the *Nirukta*, it was gradually assimilated in the *itihāsa-purāṇa* tradition. Indeed, the *gāthās*, *nārāśamśis*, and *ākhyānas* together strengthened the *itihāsa-purāṇa* traditions.

*Ākhyānas* or narratives developed out of the material to be found in the Ṛgvedic hymns. The *ākhyāna* of Śunaśśepa and Purūravas can be traced to the Ṛgvedic hymns or to some ancient tradition reflected in these hymns. These hymns, by their dramatic quality, indicate the existence of semi-dramatic and semi-epic *ākhyāna* literature out of which grew the later historical epics and dramas.

Śaunaka's *Bṛhaddevatā* is a land-mark in the study of the *ākhyānas* as it is the most ancient text to narrate, briefly of course, as many as forty *ākhyānas*, which are amplifications of the Ṛgvedic nucleus. *Sarvānukramaṇī* of Kātyāyana offers similar material; Ṣaḍguruśiṣya expands many of the *ākhyānas*. Finally, Sāyaṇa's prefatory notes to the hymns referring to past stories are very helpful.

#### 1. Śunaśśepa Ākhyāna : A Socio-historical study

Śunaśśepa is one of the famous seers who has visioned eight hymns in the *Ṛgveda*. The hymns I.24-30 and IX-3, form a collection of 107 *mantras*, with in which he has propitiated different gods such as Agni, Savitr, Varuṇa, Viśvedevas, Indra, Aśvins, Uṣas and Soma-Pavamāna. Among the Ṛgvedic *ākhyānas* the Śunaśśepa *ākhyāna* occupies an important place. It has been considered as the earliest specimen of story narration in the literature of the world. This *ākhyāna* is important from the point of view of the controversy about the prevalence of the human-sacrifice in ancient India. Various scholars have studied this *ākhyāna* in the socio-historical perspective.

H.L. Hariyappa,<sup>1</sup> has very ably discussed the propriety of the name Śunaśśepa. After analysing various grammatical and lingustical

1. H.L. Hariyappa, *Ṛgvedic Legends through the Ages*, Deccan College, Poona, 1953, pp.230-238

facts, he prefers the form 'Śunaśśepa' (pillar of happiness) to 'Śunaḥśśepa' (the dog tailed one). He has concluded very reasonably that the orthography of the word 'Śunaśśepa' requires proper appreciation. Śunaśśepa is the correct form, whereas 'Śunaḥśśepa' is wrong, unscientific and pretentious.

Some forty-four Ṛgvedic *mantras*, attributed to Śunaśśepa, may be traced in the *Sāmaveda Saṁhitā*.<sup>2</sup> These are uttered in various occasions during the performance of sacrifices. Besides this, twenty *mantras* of the *Vājasaneyī Saṁhitā*,<sup>3</sup> and the Atharvaveda<sup>4</sup> have been ascribed to his seership.

The seed of the Śunaśśepa *ākhyāna* in the *Ṛgveda*, appears in the large form in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* and the *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*. Still further, the epics and the *Purāṇas* have described this legend with interesting additions. This fact however speaks of its development of ideas through the ages.

In the Ṛgvedic *mantras*, the name of Śunaśśepa has been mentioned three times.<sup>5</sup> Of these *mantras*, the two *mantras* in the twenty forth hymn of the first *Maṇḍala*, is attributed to Śunaśśepa. And the second hymn of the fifth *maṇḍala*, is attributed to the seer Kumāra Ātreya. These three *mantras* are as below:

"This (your praise) is what they have told me at night, this in the day-time; this knowledge speaks to my heart; may that king Varuṇa whom Śunaśśepa, invoked when fettered liberate us"<sup>6</sup>

2. *Sāmaveda Saṁhitā*, 15, 17, 28, 154, 163, 183, 214, 589 etc.

3. *Vājasaneyī Saṁhitā*, VIII-23-29; X-27, 28; XII-12; XVIII-49-55; XXI-1, 2 and XXXV-11

4. *Atharvaveda Saṁhitā*, VI-25; VII-88; XX-26-1-3; XX-45, 74, 122

5. *Rv.* I-24-12, 13; V-2-7

6. तदिन्नक्तं तद्दिवा मह्यमाहुस्तदयं केतो हृद आ वि चष्टे।

शुनःशेषो यमह्वदुभीतः सो अस्मात्राजा वरुणो मुमोक्तु।। *Rv.* I-24- 12



"You have liberated Sunassepa from a thousand stakes, for he was patient in endurance; so Agni, free us from our bonds, having sat down here (at our sacrifice), intelligent offerer of oblations."<sup>7</sup>

"You have liberated fettered Śunaśśepa from a thousand stakes, for he was patient in endurance; so, Agni, free us from our bonds, having sat down here (at our sacrifice), intelligent offerer of oblations"<sup>8</sup>

The two *mantras* mentioned above indicate that Varuṇa liberated Śunaśśepa from three stakes. Here, the seer prays Varuṇa hoping liberations from the fetters as in the case of Śunaśśepa.

In this connection, Hariyappa<sup>9</sup> doubts his seership of these two *mantras*. He opines that these *mantras* are difficult to hold that Śunaśśepa is the seer thereof. Because, in the first *mantra*, the worshipper prays, "May Varuṇa the king, to whom Śunaśśepa addressed himself, liberate us"; that is, on the precedent of Śunaśśepa's being saved by Varuṇa a later devotee is seeking a similar favour. The second *mantra* says. "Śunaśśepa in fetters prays to god Varuṇa; may Varuṇa set him free and may he remove the fetters." This situation, in the view of Hariyappa, must have been that while Śunaśśepa is praying the god for succor, those by the side are recommending him for Varuṇa's mercy. This is itself reasonable, but is inconsistent with the former *mantra*. The legend

7. शुनःशेषोह्यहृद्भीतस्त्रिष्वदित्यं दुपदेषु बद्धः।

अवेनं राजा वरुणः समृज्याद्विद्धौ अदब्धो वि मुमोक्तु पाशान्।। Rv. I-24- 13

8. शुनश्चिच्छेपं निदितं साहस्राद्युपादमुज्जो अशमिष्ट हि षः।

एवास्मदने वि मुमुग्धि पाशान्होतश्चिकित्व इह तू निषद्य।। Rv. V-2- 7

9. H.L. Hariyappa, *Rgvedic Legends Through the Ages*, pp-184-185

depicts that these *mantras* were uttered by Śunaśśepa in order to obtain release, whereas the two *mantras*, above regard the release as a thing of the past. On this basis, he infers in two ways: (a) these are not Śunaśśepa hymns at all (*Rv.*I-24 to 30). At the *Samhitā* stage, these hymns were assembled and occurrence of Śunaśśepa name in two *mantras* was responsible for the ascription. Or, (b) the two *mantras* in question are a later insertion or interpolation into the Śunaśśepa hymns.

In another *mantra* (*Rv.* V-2-7), the seer Kumāra Ātreya recorded the event of Śunaśśepa in clear terms. “You did liberate the first fettered Śunaśśepa from a thousand fold stake and he became pacified, indeed.”<sup>10</sup> Here, Agni delivered Śunaśśepa from the stake, because Agni is the deity of this *mantra*.

In the *Rgveda* other few *mantras* are indirectly related to the Śunaśśepa *ākhyāna*. In the twenty fourth hymn of the first *maṇḍala*, the first two *mantras* clearly show the propriety of Śunaśśepa *ākhyāna*. These two *mantras* are as under:

“Of many immortal gods whose good name should we contemplate? who will deliver us back to the vast earth that I may again behold my father and mother ?”<sup>11</sup>

“Of many immortal gods, we shall contemplate the Agni’s name first; he will deliver us back to this vast earth that I may again behold my father and mother.”<sup>12</sup>

10. शुनश्चिच्छेपं निदितं साहस्राद्यूपादमुज्ज्वो अशमिष्ट हि षः। *Rv.* V-2- 7

11. कस्य नूनं कतमस्यामृतानां मनामहे चारु देवस्य नाम ।

कोनो मह्या अदितये पुनर्दात्पितरं च दृशेयं मातरं च ।। *Rv.* I-24-1

12. अग्नेर्वयं प्रथमस्यामृतानां मनामहे चारु देवस्य नाम ।

स नो मह्या अदितये पुनर्दात्पितरं च दृशेयं मातरं च ।। *Rv.* I-24-2

The first *mantra* mentioned above is described, Śunaśśepa bound on the stakes and calling for the help of some gods by whose grace he can see his father and mother. In the second *mantra*, he suddenly thinks that only god Agni should be praised for well-being and by his (Agni's) mercy he would be able to see his parents. It is natural that in a miserable condition, he wants to see his parents.

It is an interesting thing to note here that Śunaśśepa was the creation of Viśvāmitra and this bears great historical importance. The *Sarvānukramaṇī*<sup>13</sup> and the *Vedārtha Dīpikā*,<sup>14</sup> mentions Śunaśśepa as the son of Ajīgarta. Actually he was the middle among the three sons of Ajīgarta. The remaining two sons are Śunaḥpucca and Śunolāṅgūla. Here is mentioned another name of Śunaśśepa, that is *Devarāta* (given by the gods); he was adopted son of Viśvāmitra. Because, he was given to Viśvāmitra by gods. So his name was called Devarāta. In this connection Hariyappa<sup>15</sup> notes that the name of Śunaśśepa, the god-given (*Devarāta*) son and heir to Viśvāmitra, is nowhere (*Rv.*I-24-1,2), even indirectly, mentioned in the second and sixtieth hymns of the *Viśvāmitra maṇḍala*. And this episode is not mentioned in the *Vasiṣṭha maṇḍala* too. According to the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*,<sup>16</sup> Vasiṣṭha was officiated as the *Brahmā* priest in the Śunaśśepa's sacrifice (and deliverance). But, however this episode is reflected in the hymn of a member of

13. अजीगर्त पुत्रो जन्मना शुनःशेषो नाम.....

दत्तपुत्राय विश्वामित्रपुत्रो देवरातो नाम । Kātyayana, *Sarvānukramaṇī*.

14. देवै रातो दत्तः .....स देवरात इति । Śadguruśiṣya, *Vedārtha Dīpikā*

15. H.L. Hariyappa, *Rgvedic Legends through the Ages*, p-187

16. तस्य ह विश्वामित्रो होताऽऽसीति जमदग्नीरद्वयुःवसिष्ठो ब्रह्मा ..... । *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*

विश्वामित्रोऽभवत् तस्मिन् होताचाध्वर्युरात्मवान् ।

जमदग्नीरभूद् ब्रह्मा वसिष्ठोऽयास्यास्यामगः ।। cf. *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, IX-7-21

the Atri family, who is no connected with this affair. Undoubtedly, the seer Kumāra Ātreya describes the current episodes in his family circle.

There is, ofcourse, Śunaśśepa appeal to Varuṇa as mentioned in the *Rgveda mantras*, I-24-12 and 13, for freedom from the bonds, of Varuṇa's capture. Again, the following two *mantras* say that Śunaśśepa was released from the fetters of Varuṇa:

“Loosen up, Varuṇa, the upper bond from us, loosen down the lower bond, and loosen the middle bond, that we may then O Āditya (Son of Aditi or Varuṇa) be free from sin in your worshp.”<sup>17</sup>

“Remove our upper bonds, untie the centre and the lower bonds that may live”<sup>18</sup>

It may be noted that two *mantras* of the *Rgveda* (I-24-1 and 3) are in the light of the ‘*Pararṣāta-gāthā*’ or the ‘*Śunaśśepākhyāna*’ which is elaborately related in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*.<sup>19</sup>

*Tattirīya Saṁhitā*<sup>20</sup> mentions that Śunaśśepa was seized by Varuṇa. Śunaśśepa prays Varuṇa with the *mantra* of ‘*Uduttamam*,’

“Varuṇa seized Śunaśśepa Ājigarti, he saw this *mantra* addressed to Varuṇa, by it, he freed himself from the noose of

17. उदुत्तमं वरुण पाशमस्मदवाधमं वि मध्यमं प्रथाय ।

अथा वयमादित्य व्रते त्वानागसो अदितये स्याम ।। *Rv.* I-24-15

18. उदुत्तमं मुमुग्धि नो वि पाशं मध्यमं चृत । अवाधमानि जीवसे ।। *Rv.* I-25-21

19. H.L. Hariyappa, *Rgvedic Legends Through the Ages*, p-186

20. शुनःश्लेषं आजिगर्ती वरुणो गृह्णात् स एताम् वरुणीं अपस्यत् तया वै स आत्मानं वरुणपाशाद् अमुञ्चत् वरुणो वा एतं गृह्णाति य उखां प्रतिमुञ्चत उदुत्तमं वरुण पाशम् अस्माद् इत्याहात्मानं एवैतया ।। *Taittiriya Saṁhitā*, V-2,1,3

Varuṇa; Varuṇa seized him who takes the fire-pan, 'From us the highest knot, O Varuṇa' noose.'<sup>21</sup>

The *Kāṭhaka Samhitā*<sup>22</sup> also alludes to the same story which is referred in the *Taittirīya Samhitā*, with some difference. The *Kapiṣṭhala-Kaṭha Samhitā*<sup>23</sup> too mentions to the Śunaśśepa-ākhyāna, exactly in the same manner, as read in the *Kāṭhaka Samhitā*.

The *Atharvaveda Samhitā* does not record the Śunaśśepa-ākhyāna. Śunaśśepa is only the seer of some hymns, viz. VI-25; VII-83. In the *Atharvaveda*, VII-88<sup>th</sup> hymn is addressed to Varuṇa. Here, the Ṛgvedic mantra 'Uduttamam' .. (Rv.I-24-15), is repeated as the third mantra of this hymn.

The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*<sup>24</sup> gives in detail, the story of Śunaśśepa's deliverance. Other *Brāhmaṇa* texts do not mention any reference to Śunaśśepa. The *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*,<sup>25</sup> repeats this story, as found in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* with a few changes. The summary of the Śunaśśepa episode as found in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VII.13-18, as follows:

हरिश्चन्द्रो ह वैधसा ऐक्ष्वाको राजा अपुत्र आस । तस्य शतं जाया बभूवुस्तासु पुत्रं न लेभे ।  
तस्य ह पर्वतनारदौ गृह ऊषतुः । स ह नारदं पप्रच्छ -  
यन्विदंपुत्रमिच्छन्ति ये विजानन्ति ये च न ।  
किंस्वित्पुत्रेण विन्दते तन्म आचक्ष्व नारद । । इति ।

21. H.L. Hariyappa, *Rgvedic Legends Through the Ages*, p-190

22. उदुत्तम वरुण पाशम् अस्माद् इति शुनश्शेषो व एताम् आजिगर्तिर्वरुणगृहीतो पश्यत् तया वै स वरुण पाशाद् अमुज्यत वरुणपाशम् एवैतया प्रमुञ्चते .... ।। *Kāṭhaka Samhitā*, XIX -11

23. *Kapiṣṭhala Kaṭhā Samhitā*, XXI-1

24. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VII-13 to 18

25. *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*, XV-17-27



स एकया पृष्टो दशभिः प्रत्युवाच -  
 ऋणमस्मिन्सनयत्यमृतत्वं च गच्छति ।  
 पिता पुत्रस्य जातस्य पश्येच्चेज्जीवतो मुखम् ॥1॥  
 यावन्तः पृथिव्यां भोगा यावन्तो जातवेदसी ।  
 यावन्तो अप्सु प्राणिनां भूयान्पुत्रो पितुस्ततः ॥2॥  
 अन्नं ह प्राणाः शरणं ह वासो रूपं हिरण्यं पशवो विवाहाः ।  
 सखा ह जाया कृपणं ह दुहिता ज्योतिर्हि पुत्रः परमे व्योमन् ॥3॥  
 नापुत्रस्य लोकोऽस्तीति बत्सर्वे पशवो विदुः ।  
 तस्मात्पुत्रो मातरं स्वसारं चाधिरोहति ॥4॥

अथैनमुवाच वरुणं राजानमुपधाव पुत्रो मे जायतां तेन त्वा यजा ।इति । तथेति । स वरुणं  
 राजानमुपससार पुत्रो मे जायता तेन त्वा यजा ।इति । तथेति । तस्य पुत्रो जज्ञे रोहितो नाम । तं  
 होवाचाजनि वै ते पुत्रो यजस्व मा अनेनेति । स होवाच यदा वै पशुर्निर्दशो भवत्यथ स मेध्यो  
 भवति निर्दशोन्वस्त्वथ त्वा यजा इति तथेति ।

स ह निर्दश आस तं होवाच निर्दशोन्यभूद्यजस्व मा अनेनेति । स होवाच यदा वै पशोर्दन्ता  
 जायन्तो अथ मोध्यो भवति । दन्तान्वस्य जायन्तामथ त्वा यजा इति । तथेति । स ह संनाहं प्रापत्तं  
 होवाच संनाहं नु प्रप्रोध्यजस्व मा अनेनेति । स तथेत्युक्त्वा पुत्रमामंत्रयामास ततायं वै मह्यं त्वामददाहन्त  
 त्वयाहमिमं यजा इति । स ह नेत्युक्त्वा धनुरादायारण्यमुपातस्थौ स संवत्सरमरण्ये चचार । अथ  
 हैक्ष्वाकं वरुणो जग्राह तस्य होदरं जज्ञे तदु ह रोहितः शुश्राव सो अरण्याद्ग्राममेयाय तदिन्द्रः  
 पुरुषरूपेण पर्येत्योवाच ..... । चरैवेति । तृतीयं संवत्सरमरण्ये चचार सो अरण्याद्ग्राममेयाय तदिन्द्रः  
 पुरुषरूपेण पर्येत्योवाच । आस्ते भग आसीनस्योर्ध्वस्तिष्ठति तिष्ठतः ।

शेते निपद्यमानस्य चराति चरतो भगः । । चरैव इति । चरैवेति वै मा ब्राह्मणोऽवोचदिति ह  
 षष्ठं संवत्सरमरण्ये चचार । सोऽजीगर्तं सौयवसिमृषिमशनया परीतमरण्य उपेयाय । तस्य ह त्रयः  
 पुत्रा आसुः शुनःपुच्छः शुनश्शेषः शुनोलाङ्गुल इति । तं होवाच-ऋषेऽहं ते शतं ददाम्यहमेषामेकेनाऽऽत्मानं  
 निष्क्रीणा, इति । स ज्येष्ठं पुत्रं निगृह्णान उवाच- न न्विवमिति । न एवमिति कनिष्ठं माता । तौ ह  
 मध्ये संपादयाज्वक्रतुः शुनश्शेषे । तस्य ह शतं दत्त्वा स तमादाय सोऽरण्याद्ग्राममेयाय । स पितरमेत्योवाच  
 - तत, हन्ताहमनेनाऽत्मानं निष्क्रीणा इति । स वरुणं राजानमुपससारानेन त्वा यजा इति । तथेति,  
 भूयान्वै ब्राह्मणः क्षत्रियादिति वरुण उवाच । तस्मा एतं राजसूयं यज्ञक्रतुं प्रोवाच । तमेतमभिषेचनीये  
 पुरुषं पशुमालेभे । ।

तस्य ह विश्वामित्रो होताऽऽसीजमदनिरध्वर्युवसिष्ठो ब्रह्माऽयास्य उद्गाता । तस्मा उपाकृताय नियोक्तारं न विविदुः । स होवाचाजीगर्तः सौयवसिर्मह्यमपरं शतं दत्ताहमेनंनियोक्ष्यामीति । तस्मा अपरं शतं ददुस्तं स निनियोज । तस्मा उपाकृताय नियुक्तायाऽऽप्रीताय पर्यग्निकृताय विशसितारं न विविदुः । स होवाचाजिगर्तः सौयवसिर्मह्यमपरं शतं दत्ताहमेनं विशसिष्यामिति । तस्मा अपरं शतं ददुः । सोऽसिं निःशान एयाय । अथ ह शुनःशेष ईक्षाज्जक्रेऽमानुषमिव वै मा विशसिष्यन्ति । हन्ताहं देवता उपधावामीति । स प्रजापतिमेव प्रथमं देवतानामुपससार, कस्यनूनं कतमस्यामृतानमित्येतयर्चा । तं प्रजापतिरुवाचाग्निर्वै देवानां नेदिष्टस्तमेवोपधावेति । सोऽअग्निमुपससार, अग्नेर्वयं प्रथमस्यामृतानामित्येतयर्चा । तमग्निरुवाच सविता वै प्रसवानामीशे तमेवोपधावेति । स सवितारमुपससार, अभित्वदेव सवितररित्येतेनतृचेन । तं सवितोवाच वरुणाय वै राज्ञो नियुक्तोऽसि, तमेवोपधावेति । स वरुणं राजानमुपससारात् उत्तराभिरेकत्रिंशता । तं वरुण उवाचाग्निर्वैदेवानां मुखं सुहृदयतमस्तं नु स्तुह्यथ त्वोत्त्रक्ष्याम इति । सोग्निं तुष्टावात् उत्तराभिर्द्वाविंशत्या । तमग्निरुवाच विश्वान् देवान्स्तुह्यथ त्वोत्त्रक्ष्याम इति । स विश्वान्देवांस्तुष्टाव, नमो महद्भ्ये नमो अर्भकेभ्यः इत्येनयर्चा ।

तं विश्वेदेवा ऊचुरिन्द्रो वै देवानामोजिष्ठो बलिष्ठः सहिष्ठः सत्तमः पारियिष्णुतमस्तं नु स्तुह्यथ त्वोत्त्रक्ष्याम इति । स इन्द्रं तुष्टाव, यच्चिद्धि सत्य सोमपा इति चैतेन सूक्तेनोत्तरस्य च पञ्चदशभिः । तस्मा इन्द्रः स्तूयमानः प्रीतो मनसा हिरण्यरथं ददौ तमेतया प्रतीयाय, शश्वदिन्द्र इति ।

तमिन्दु उवाचाश्विनौस्तुह्यथत्वोत्त्रक्ष्याम इति । सोऽश्विनौ तुष्टावात् उत्तरेण तृचेन । तमश्विना ऊचतुरुषसं नु स्तुह्यथत्वोत्त्रक्ष्याम इति । स उषसं तुष्टावात् उत्तरेण तृचेन । तस्य स्मर्युक्तायां वि पाशो मुमुचे कनीय ऐक्ष्वाकस्योदरं भवत्युत्तमस्यामेवर्च्युक्तायां, वि पाशो मुमुचेऽगद ऐक्ष्वाक आस । । शुनःशेषो अज्जसवं ददर्श । अथ ह शुनःशेषो विश्वामित्रस्यांकमाससाद । स होवाचाजीगर्तः सौयवसी ऋषे पुनर्मे पुत्रं देहीति । नेति होवाच । विश्वामित्रो देवा वा इमं मह्यमरासतेति स ह देवरातो वैश्वामित्र आस तस्येते कपिलेय बाभ्रवः । स होवाचाजीगर्तः सौयवसी त्वं वेहि विह्वयाहा इति । स होवाचाजीगर्तः सौयवसीराङ्गिरसो जन्मनाऽस्याजीगर्तिः श्रुतः कविः । ऋषे पैतामहत्तन्तोर्माऽपगाः पुनरेहि मामिति । स होवाच शुनःशेषोऽदर्शुं स्त्वा शासहस्तं न यच्छूद्रेष्टलप्सत । गवां त्रीणि शतानि त्वमावृणीथा मदङ्गीर इति । असंधेयमिति ह विश्वामित्र अपससाद स होवाच विश्वामित्रो भीम एव सयवसीः शसेन विशिशसिषुः । अस्थान्मैतस्य पुत्रो भूर्ममैवोपेहि पुत्रतामिति । स होवाच विश्वामित्रो ज्येष्ठो मे त्वं पुत्राणां स्यात् स्तव श्रेष्ठा प्रजा स्यात् । उपेया दैवं मे दायं तेन वै त्वोपमन्त्रया

इति । विश्वामित्रः पुत्रानामन्त्रयामास मधुच्छन्दाः शृणोतन ऋषभो रेणुकष्टकः । ये के च भ्रातरः स्थ नास्मै ज्येष्ठाय कल्पद्वमिति ।

तस्यः ह विश्वामित्रस्यैकं शतं पुत्रा आसुः । पञ्चाशदेव ज्यायांसो मधुच्छन्दसः पञ्चाशत्कनीयसः । तद् ज्यायांसो न ते कुशलं मेनिरे । ताननु व्याजहारन्तान्वः प्रजा भक्षिष्ठेति त एतेऽन्द्राः पुण्ड्रा शबर पुलिन्दा मूतिबा इत्युदन्त्या बहवो वैश्वामित्रा दस्यूनां भूयिष्ठाः । स होवाच मधुच्छन्दाः पञ्चशता सार्धं यन्नः पिता संजानीते तस्मिंस्तिष्ठामहे वयं । पुरस्ता सर्वे कुर्महि त्वामन्वज्चो वयं स्मसीति । अथ ह विश्वामित्रः प्रतीतः पुत्रांस्तुष्टाव । ते वै पुत्राः पशुमन्तो वीरवन्तो भविष्यथ । पुरा एत्रा वीरवन्तो देवरातेन गाथिना । सर्वे राध्याः स्थ पुत्रा एष वः सद्विवाचनम् । एष व कुशिका वीरो देवरातस्तमन्वितः ।।

The rendering of this Brāhmana text is as follows : 26

King Hariścandra, the son of Vedhas, of the Ikṣvāku race, was childless. He had a hundred wives; from them, he did not obtain a son. Once the sages Parvata and Nārada visited his house. The king asked Nārada: "Now they, indeed, desire a son-those who are learned and those who are not-what, indeed, does one gain by a son ? Do thou tell me that, O Nārada."

To this question Nārada replied in ten *gāthās* explaining the merits of begetting a son.

"On him does he transfer (his) debt and attains immortality, if the father sees the face of the living son, when born."

'As many are the pleasures in the earth for the beings as many in the fire, as many in the waters, more than these are in a son for a father.'

'Food, indeed, is the vital breath; a resort, a dwelling is (or the cloak is); (beautiful) form indeed, gold is; cattle indeed are the

26. Tr. S.A. Dange, *Divine Hymns and Ancient Thought*, Vol-II Navaranga Publication, New Delhi

marriages; friend, indeed, the wife is; the daughter, verily is the cutting misery. The son, verily, is the light in heaven.'

'There is no world (i.e place to go after death) for the son-less; this indeed, know all beasts (creatures). Hence (to create a son anyhow) a son rides over a mother and (a brother over) a sister.'

Thus, Nārada told him. Then, he said to him (king), "solicit (run to) king Varuṇa, saying may a son be borne to me; with him (as the victim) I shall sacrifice to you."

Saying 'Be it so' king Hariścandra approached Varuṇa with the request "may a son be born to me; with him I shall sacrifice to you." 'Be it so' said Varuṇa.

Then, the son, named Rohita, was born. But on the birth of the son, the king was unwilling to give him up to Varuṇa. To the king, said Varuṇa-'A son, indeed, is born to you, sacrifice to me with him."

Hariścandra said, "When a beast gets free from the ten (days of impurity of birth), then he becomes fit to be sacrificed. Let him be free from the ten days; then I would sacrifice to you with him."

He became free from the ten days. To him, Varuṇa said, "He is, indeed, free from the ten days; sacrifice to me with him." King said, "When the teeth get sprouted for the beast, then he becomes fit for being sacrificed. Let the teeth get sprouted for him, then I would sacrifice to you with him."

In the meantime Rohita grew into youth. Again, Varuṇa persisted in his demand, and Rohita came to know the old contract of his father with the god Varuṇa. Rohita said- 'Indeed, not!.' He

went to the forest, bow in hand, to fulfil the demand of Varuṇa. He wandered for full one year. In the meantime, Varuṇa became angry.

Viruṇa seized Hariścandra, who, as a result began to suffer from dropsy. Rothita heard this and was coming back, when Indra came and advised him to wander more and more. Third year Indra said to him for, "the fortune of a man, who sits, sits, sits also, it rises when he rises, it sleeps when he sleeps, it moves well when he moves. Wander."

Thus, Rohita wandered in the forest for the sixth year. He approached the sage Ajīgarta, the son of Sūyavas, afflicted by hunger in the forest. Ajīgarta had three sons, Śunaḥpuccha, Śunaśśepa, and Śunolāngūla. Rohita told him, "O seer! I shall give you hundred cows; with one of these sons I would like purchase, set free myself from Varuṇa." Then, Ajīgarta holding the eldest son and said 'not indeed him' and the mother holding the youngest son.

Thus, they agreed upon the middle one, Śunaśśepa. Then, Rohita gave for him a hundred cows, returned to the village from the forest.

Rohita brought him to his father and told him about his proposal. Hariścandra approached Varuṇa, and said 'with him I shall sacrifice to you'. Varuṇa agreed for 'a Brāhmaṇa victim is better than a Kṣatriya.' Next, Varuṇa explained to Hariścandra, this *Rājasūya* sacrifice and fixed this human victim for the *Abhiṣecanīya* rite.

The sacrifice began. Viśvāmitra was officiating as *Hotṛ*, Jamadagni as *Adhvaryu*, Agastya as *Udgatṛ* and Vasiṣṭha as

*Brahmā*. They could not find a person willing to bind to the sacrificial post. Ajīgarta, then said 'give me another hundred cows, I will bind him.' They gave him another hundred. After, he had been bound, the *Apri* mantras, were recited, and Agni carried round him, they could not find a slaughter. Ajīgarta then said, 'give me another hundred and I will kill him.' They gave him another hundred. Ajīgarta came near whetting the dagger (sword).

Then Śunaśśepa thought, 'like a non-human victim, they will kill me. Alas! I shall run to the gods'. He approached (mentally) Prajāpati, with the (R̥gvedic) *mantra* कस्यनून .....। (R̥v.I-24-1). Prajāpati said to him - 'Agni is nearest to the gods; you do run to him alone'. He approached Agni with the *mantra*- अग्नेर्वयं प्रथमस्य .... (R̥v.I-24-2). Agni says- "Savitṛ indeed, commands the creatures.' He approached Savitṛ with three *mantras*- अभित्वादेव सवितार .... (R̥v.I-24-3). Savitṛ Says - "You are appointed king Varuṇa." He approached king Varuṇa with the following thirty-one *mantras*. (hymn I-24-6 to 15 and I-25-1 to 21). Varuṇa says to him - 'Agni is indeed the mouth of the god; he, the best among those who are large hearted, praise him, indeed. Then we shall free you'. Śunaśśepa praised Agni with following twenty-two *mantras*. (R̥v.I-26-1 to 10 and 27-1 to 12). Next Agni says- 'Praise the All gods (as a group called Viśvedevās); then shall we set you free.' He praised all gods with the *mantra*-नमो महद्भ्यो ... (R̥v.I-27-13). Then all gods proposed Indra."

Śunaśśepa praised Indra with a hymn. (R̥v.I-29) and fifteen *mantras* of the following hymn. (R̥v.I-30-1 to 15) When he prays - शश्वदिन्द्र .....। (R̥v.I-30-16), Indra, had become pleased with his praise, presented him with a golden chariot. Indra then told him, 'Praise

the Ásvins, then we shall release you.' He then praised the Ásvins with the three *mantras*. (*Rv*.I-30-17 to 19). Ásvins answered, 'Praise Uṣas, then we shall release you.' He then praised Uṣas with the three *mantras*. (*Rv*.I-30-20 to 22). As he repeated one *mantra* after the other, the Varuṇa's fetters were loosened and the belly of Hariścandra became smaller. After he had done repeating the last *mantra*, all the fetters were taken off, and Hariścandra restored to health again.

Then, Śunaśśepa was invited to perform the closing rite called the 'Abhiṣecanīya'. In this ceremony, he saw 'añjassva', the method of direct preparation of the Somā- juice. Verily Śunaśśepa got admiration from the *Yajñavedi*. But, forsaken by the parents, here, he had to search for a new parents. He straight way went and sat on the lap of Viśvāmitra. Now Ajīgarta asked Viśvāmitra to give his son back. Viśvāmitra answered, "No for the gods have presented him to me". Since that time he was Devarāta, Viśvāmitra's son. Ajīgarta further said, to Śunaśśepa "Thou, art know as the seer from Ajīgarta's family, as a descendant of the Aṅgirasa. Therefore,

O seer, do not leave your ancestral home; return to me."

Śunaśśepa answered, "What is not found even in the hands of a Śūdra, one has seen in the hand, the knife (to kill the son); three hundred cows thou hast preferred to me, O Aṅgirasa!"

Then, Viśvāmitra also said, "Fearful was Sūyavasa's son (Ajīgarta) to look at, when he was standing ready to murder, holding knife in his hand; do not become his son again; but enter my family as my son".

Viśvāmitra, again, invited Śunaśśepa to join him; "you shall be the eldest of my sons, your progeny will have priority, my divine heritage shall be yours, with that I invite you."

Viśvāmitra had a hundred and one sons. He called them all and said, 'listen to me Madhucchandas, Rṣabha, Rēṇu, Aṣṭaka (and all). Are there any among your brothers who are not for Śunaśśepa's Priority?' Madhucchandas was the midmost of his sons. The fifty brothers, eldest to him, thought that the proposal was not their interest. They were cursed by the angry father (Viśvāmitra) that they would have low and barbarous life.

The other fifty with Madhucchandas humbly submitted whatever father proposed. They made Śunaśśepa their eldest brother. Viśvāmitra was pleased, blessed them all. Thus, Devarāta (Śunaśśepa) got over lordship of the Jahnus and the divine lore.

The *Bṛhaddevatā*<sup>27</sup> mentions, the name of Śunaśśepa three times. First and second references do not contribute to the historical study of the Śunaśśepa-ākhyāna. The third reference however, points out an incident in the legend of Śunaśśepa as given in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*. This verse is - "Being praised with the stanza 'For ever' (Śaśvat: *Rv.*I-30-16), he (Indra) rejoiced in mind and gave to Śunaśśepa (the seer) a celestial car all made of gold."<sup>28</sup>

In this connection, Hariyappa observes: "Here, probably Śunaśśepa the seer is meant and not the poor victim of Hariścandras sacrifice."<sup>29</sup> But, U.C. Sharma<sup>30</sup> has expressed the

27. Śaunaka, *Bṛhaddevatā*, I-54; II-115; III-103

28. स्थूयमानः शश्वदिति प्रीतस्तु मनसा ददौ ।

शुनश्शोपाय दिव्यं तु रथं सर्वं हिरण्यम् ।। *Bṛhaddevatā*, III-103

29. Hariyappa, *Rgvedic Legends Through the Ages*, pp-85-86

30. U.C.Sharma, *The Viśvāmitras and Vasiṣṭhas*, pp-138-139



views that it is quite clear from every known evidence that there did not exist two persons of the name of Śunaśśepa. The victim of Hariścandra's sacrifice and the Ṛgvedic seer, Śunaśśepa is considered as one person in the Vedic and post-Vedic texts. He clearly shows that the connect of the above-mentioned verse of the *Bṛhaddevatā*, is supported by the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* narrative- इन्द्रः स्थूयमानः मनस्य हिरण्यं रथं ददौ ।

The *Nirukta*<sup>31</sup> refers to Śunaśśepa. Yāska says that - 'women are given away, sold and abandoned; but not the man. Some say that the man is also sold, as is seem in the case of Śunaśśepa.' Of course this reference does not give any historical clue.

The *Sarvānukramaṇī* of Kātyāyāna,<sup>32</sup> says that Śunaśśepa was son of Ajigarta and the adopted son of Viśvāmitra, who was provided to the latter by gods. It is good support to the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* version of the Śunaśśepa legend.

Ṣaḍguruśiṣya the author of the commentary *Vedārtha dīpikā* on the *Sarvānukramaṇī*<sup>33</sup> follows the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* and described the Śunaśśepa story in twenty-two stanzas.

*Vāsiṣṭha Dharmaśāstra*, one of the ancient works on Hindu law, includes Śunaśśepa, in the list of the types of sons. Here, Śunaśśepa exemplifies two kinds of sons.<sup>34</sup> i.e; *Kṛita* and

31. स्त्रीणां दानविक्रयातिसर्गं विद्यन्ते न पुंसः। पुंसोपित्येके। शौनःशेषे दर्शनात्। Yāska, *Nirukta* III-4,

32. Kātyāyana, *Sarvānukramaṇī*.

33. .... अजीगर्तः शुनःशेषः स कृत्रिमो वैश्वामित्रो देवरातो ..... । Ṣaḍguru Śiṣya, *Vedārtha Dīpikā* cf. U.C. Sharma, *The Viśvāmitras and Vasiṣṭhas*, p-139

34. अथादायादबन्धूनां सहोढा एव प्रथमः। या गर्भिणी संस्क्रियते सहोढः पुत्रो भवति। दत्तको द्वितीयः। यं मातापितरौ दद्याताम् क्रीतस् तृतीयः। तच्छ शुनःशेषेन व्याख्याताम्। स्वयमुपगतश् चतुर्थः। तच्छ शुनःशेषेन व्याख्यातम्।

शुनःशेषो वै यूपे नियुक्तो देवतास् तुष्टाव। तस्येह देवताः पाशम् मुमुञ्चु स्तां ऋत्विज ऊचुः। ममैवायम् पुत्रोस्त्विति तान् ह न संपदे। ते संपादयामासुः। एषः एव यं कामयेत् तस्य पुत्रोस्त्विति। तस्य ह विश्वमित्रो होतासीत् तस्य पुत्रत्वम् ईयाय।

*Vasiṣṭha Dharmaśāstra*, Q. *Rgvedic Legends Through the Ages*, p-200

*Svayamupāgata*: 'a son who is bought for price' and 'a son who approaches by himself.' Here *Kṛtā* is a kind of son who is bought for price; therefore, as Śunaśśepa was a *Kṛtā* son for Hariścandra; and secondly *Svayamupāgata* is called that Śunaśśepa approached Viśvāmitra by himself and chose him as his father.

Sāyaṇa has not contribute to the historical study for the Śunaśśepa - ākhyāna. In his commentary on the *Rgveda*, he quoting the story from the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*.

It is evident from Sāyaṇa's commentary on the *Rgveda* that he has no special point on this Śunaśśepa - ākhyāna adding to its historical aspect.

The *Sūtra* works have given a place to the Śunaśśepa - ākhyāna in religious rites. In this connection, the *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra*<sup>35</sup> mentions that the Śunaśśepa - ākhyāna is related to a king, who has conquered a battle, even though he was not performing any sacrifice. Thereby, he did not incur even the slightest evil. The *Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra*,<sup>36</sup> the *Āpastamba Śrauta Sūtra*,<sup>37</sup> and the *Hiraṇyakeśi Śrauta Sūtra*,<sup>38</sup> mention at the end of the Śunaśśepa - ākhyāna that the sacrificer offers the golden seat to the *Hotṛ* and a cluster of golden grass to the *Adhvaryu*. This *Sūtra* texts show that Śunaśśepa - ākhyāna was considered holy when it was related just after the coronation of a king. At the same time it was prescribed to be related when some king returned after winning the battle.

35. *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra*, IX -3-13

36. *Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra*, XV-6-5

37. *Āpastambha Śrauta Sūtra*, XVIII-19-14

38. *Hiraṇyakeśi Śrauta Sūtra*, XIII-6-38

The *Rāmāyaṇa*<sup>39</sup> records the Śunaśśepa - ākhyāna in a very different form. In the *Bālakāṇḍa*, sixty and sixty one cantos are related to the Śunaśśepa - ākhyāna. After careful examination of the Śunaśśepa story, as it is given in the *Rāmāyaṇa* version, it is quite in contrast with which that followed in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* and the *Śārikhāyana Śrauta Sūtra*. Certain notable changes have been introduced in the *Rāmāyaṇa* version. These are<sup>40</sup> :

1. In the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, the sacrificer is king Harścandra; but in the *Rāmāyaṇa* the performer is king Ambarīṣa.
2. In the sacrifice is arranged to appease Varuṇa's anger; but in the *Rāmāyaṇa* the sacrificial victim was stolen away by Indra.
3. In the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, Śunaśśepa is said to be the son of Ajīgarta; but in the *Rāmāyaṇa* he is said to be the son of Ṛcika.
4. In the former, Viśvāmitra comes on the scene only at the time of sacrifice as one of the officiating priests; in the latter he has entered in the story even before the sacrifice, but does not attend it. He also teaches Śunaśśepa two *gāthās* to be recited at the proper time to prevent the latter's death
5. The revolt and degradation of Viśvāmitra's sons occur after the sacrifice in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*; while it preceded the sacrifice in the *Rāmāyaṇa*.
6. In the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, only 51 sons of Viśvāmitra, of whom Madhucchandasa is leader, obey their father's command to accept Śunaśśepa's primogeniture. But in the *Rāmāyaṇa* all the sons

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39. *Rāmāyaṇa*, 1-60-4 to I-61-27

40. U.C. Sharma, *The Viśvāmitras and the Vasiṣṭhas*, p-143

including Madhuccandas take part in the revolt and its consequence. The command also seem to be strange and funny in the *Rāmāyaṇa* version. It is, that in order to save Śunaśśepa, all the sons should offer themselves as victims at the sacrifice.

7. The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* depicts that Viśvāmitra adopts Śunaśśepa as his son and includes him in his family. The *Rāmāyaṇa* is completely silent about what happens to Śunaśśepa after his deliverance.

Both texts are quite different from each other in their nature as well as content. It is quite clear that the *Rāmāyaṇa* has made full use of fancy in introducing changes in the main theme of the legend. It is also possible that Vālmiki has taken into consideration the changed form of the *ākhyāna* which could have been current in his contemporary society as a folk-tale.<sup>41</sup>

The *Mahabharata*<sup>42</sup> sketches an outline of the Śunaśśepa - ākhyāna at one place only. It occurs in the narration of numerous deeds performed by Viśvāmitra as recorded in the third chapter of the *Anuśāsana parva*. However, the Śunaśśepa - ākhyāna is given a secondary importance.

The narration in the *Mahābhārata* is based on both the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* versions of the story. The

41. U.C. Sharma, *The Viśvāmitras and the Vasiṣṭhas*, p-144

42. *Mahābhārata*, *Anuśāsana Parva*, 13-3, 6-8

ऋचीकस्यात्मजश्चैव शुनःशेपो महातपाः ।  
विमोक्षितो महासत्रात् पशुताम् अप्युपागतः ।।  
हरिश्चन्द्र क्रतौ देवांस्तोषयित्वात्म तेजसा ।  
पुत्रतां इनुसंप्राप्तो विश्वामित्रस्यधीमतः ।।  
नाभिवादयते ज्येष्ठाम् देवरातम् नरादिप ।  
पुत्रः पञ्चाशद् एवापि शप्ताः श्वपचतां गताः ।।

*Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata* also take Śunaśśepa as son of Ṛcika; while *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* mention him as son of Ajigarta. The performance of sacrifice by Hariścandra is a common point in the *Mahābhārata* as well as in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*; while in the *Rāmāyaṇa* the performer is Ambarīṣa. The number of Viśvāmitra's sons was fifty and they were cursed by him; this is also a common point in the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* says that there were 101 sons of Viśvāmitra of whom the first fifty were cursed.

In the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*,<sup>43</sup> the Śunaśśepa - ākhyāna has been narrated in two places. The majority of its portion is similar to *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* version. Here the name of Hariścandra's father is given as Triśaṅku as against Vedhas in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* narrative. Besides, the *Harivaṁśa Purāṇa*,<sup>44</sup> the *Vāyu Purāṇa*,<sup>45</sup> and *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*<sup>46</sup> narrate Śunaśśepa's adoption by Viśvāmitra. Only the name Haridaśva of the *Harivaṁśa Purāṇa* is substituted for Hariścandra.<sup>47</sup> These three *Purāṇa* texts mention the story in the context of the birth episode of Jamadagni and Viśvāmitra. The families of Kuśika and Bhārgava were interrelated through Satyavatī, elder sister of Viśvāmitra, with whom Ṛcika Bhārgava married. Jamadagni is the eldest son of Ṛcika and Satyavatī, and Śunaśśepa is the midmost, Śunaḥpuccha is the

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43. *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, IX-7-7 to 27 and IX-16-29 to 37

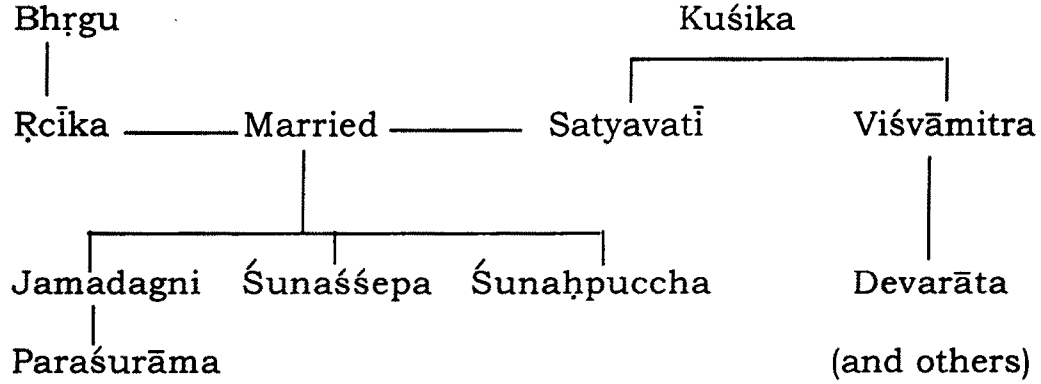
44. *Harivaṁśa Purāṇa*, I-27 41 to 58

45. *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 91-84 to 97

46. *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*, III-6- to 71

47. हरिदश्वस्य यज्ञे तु पशुत्वे विनियोजितः *Harivaṁśa Purāṇa*, I-27-56

youngest.<sup>48</sup> However, the genealogy given in the *Purāṇas* may be as below:



But, in the opinion of the modern scholars, genealogy given is above unreliable. In this connection Hariyappa<sup>49</sup> opines- 'The author of *Harivaṃśa*, whoever it is, simply appended that series of three brothers to this illustrious Bhṛgu line substituting Jamadagni's name for the eldest !..... At any rate, the latter do not fit in with the context.'

Pargitter<sup>50</sup> has conceived that Śunaśśepa was a grandson of Satyavatī and Ṛcīka; and therefore the grand-nephew of Visvāmitra. He has added that Ajīgarta, (who was said to be father of Śunaśśepa in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*) was the son of Ṛcīka and younger brother of Jamadagni. Further, he says that it may be assumed that if the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* has made a mistake in recording the name of Hariścandra's father; it may have done the same thing in the case of Ajīgarta's father.

48. और्वस्यैवं ऋचिकस्य सत्यवत्यां महायशः।

जमदग्नीस्तपोवीराज्जज्ञे ब्रह्मविदां वराः।

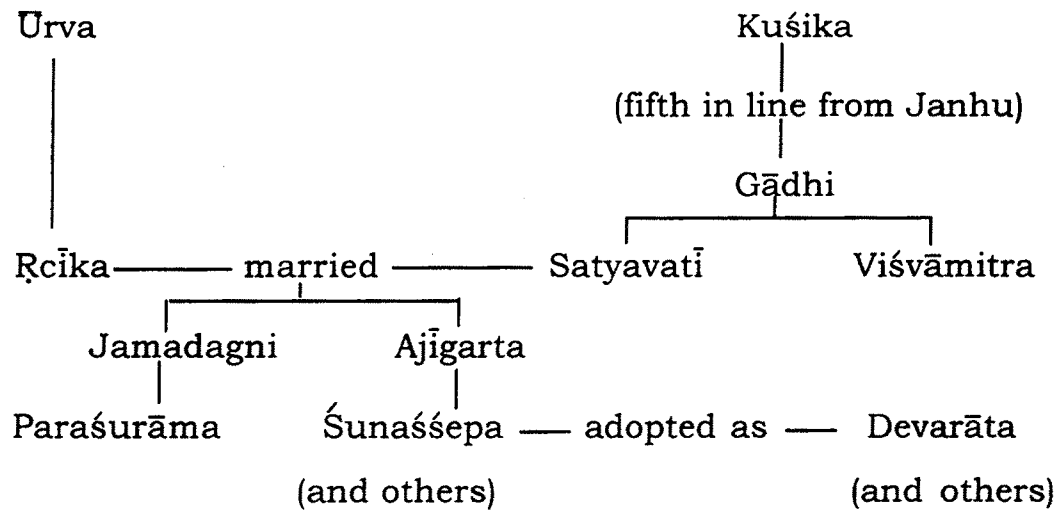
मध्यमश्चशुनःशेषः शुनःपुच्छः कनिष्ठकः। *Harivaṃśa Purāṇa*, I-27-12,35

49. Hariyappa, *Rgvedic Legends Through the Ages*, p-212

50. Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, pp-198-206,219

U.C. Sharma - "the genealogical position of Śunaśśepa as envisaged by Pargitter seems to be more possible. Ajīgarta, father of Śunaśśepa, may have been younger brother of Jamadagni and son of Ṛcika and Satyavatī. Thus, Śunaśśepa becomes the grand-nephew of Viśvāmitra. Without this hypothesis, it seems well-nigh impossible to bring the Vedic source in line with the post-Vedic sources."<sup>51</sup>

Reconstructed genealogy may be as below :



The reading of Śunaśśepa - ākhyāna as can be seen in the *Rgveda* or *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* is found to be the basis for its development as found in the *Rāmayaṇa*. There appears to be much difference between the readings of these ākhyāna in those texts. But the reason behind such modification in the Śunaśśepa - ākhyāna of the *Rāmayaṇa* has remained a question before the historians till today.

51. U.C.Sharma, *The Viśvāmitras and the Vasiṣṭhas*, p-154

## ii. The Ākhyāna of Ūrvaśī and Purūravas

An account of Ūrvaśī and Purūravas first time occurs in the *Rgveda*, and ninety-fifth hymn in the tenth *Maṇḍala* contains a dialogue between Ūrvaśī and Purūravas. Hence the Vedic version of this myth as found in the *Rgveda* and the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, is considered to be its the oldest form. The post-Vedic version of it may be said to be a development form of the Vedic version.

The *Rgveda* identifies Purūravas as an excellent sacrificer.<sup>1</sup> So also Ūrvaśī is spoken of as giving divine birth for a seer Vasiṣṭha, who is identified there with fire.<sup>2</sup> The *Rgvedic* story as can be found in the hymn X-95, may be summarised as follows:

Ūrvaśī, a celestial Apsaras (nymph), fell in love with a mortal king, Purūravas. She agreed to go and stay with the king. She laid down certain conditions, violation of which would compel her to leave his company. After some time, the Gandharvas, who felt the absence of Ūrvaśī, so arranged the matter that the king was compelled to violate the conditions. They carried the pet lambs of Ūrvaśī off. When her lambs were carried off, she wanted to take leave of Purūravas. The king tried to appeal to her motherly feelings in the name of his child which she was carrying in her womb (*mantras* 12-13). But, Ūrvaśī told him frankly that she would never return. She told him that he should not die that way for nothing, as there was no hope of winning the heart of an unwilling woman. She concluded that the friendship of a woman was not reliable and that women at heart are

1. त्वमग्ने मनवे द्यामवाशयः पुरुरवसे सुकृते सुकृत्तरः। *Rv.* I-31-4

2. उतासि मैत्रावरुणो वसिष्ठोर्वश्या ब्रह्मन्मनसोऽधि जातः। *Rv.* VII-33-11



comparable to wicked wolves. (*mantra* 15). This story ends with the promise from the gods, that king Purūravas would be happy in the other world. (*mantra* 18).

The *Samvāda* between Ūrvaśī and Purūravas is as below:

**Purūravas :** Ho indignant wife, with mind relenting, stay awhile, let us now interchange discourse. These, our secret thoughts, while unspoken, did not yield us happiness even at the last day.<sup>3</sup>

**Ūrvaśī :** What can we accomplish through such discourse ? I have passed away from you like the first of the downs. Return, Purūravas, to your dwelling. I am as hard to catch as the wind.<sup>4</sup>

**Purūravas :** The arrow is not to be cast from the quiver for glory. I am no longer the impetuous despoiler of the cattle of the enemy, nor of their hundred fold riches. My prowess having lost its strength, my might no longer flashes forth; my warriors the terrifiers of the foe here not my shout in battle.<sup>5</sup>

**Ūrvaśī :** If, Uṣas, this Ūrvaśī, offering food and wealth to her father-in-law, lower her husband she has repaid from the neighbouring house to her husband's home, where she loved her lord being delighted night and day by his embraces.<sup>6</sup>

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3. हये जाये मनसा तिष्ठ घोरे वाचांसि मिश्रा कृणवावहै नु ।

न नौ मन्त्रा अनुदितास एते मयस्करन् परतरे चनाहन् ।। *Rv.* X-95-1

4. किमेता वाचा कृणवा तवाहं प्राक्रमिषमुषसामग्रियेव ।

पुरूरवः पुनरस्तं परेहि दुरापना वातइवाहमस्मि ।। *Rv.* X-95-2

5. इषुर्न श्रिय इषुधेरसना गोषाः शतसा न रंहिः ।

अवीरे क्रतौ वि दविद्युत्तन्नोरा न मायुं चितयन्त धुनयः ।। *Rv.* X-95-3

6. सा वसु दधती श्वशुराय वय उषो यदि वष्ट्यन्तिगृहात् ।

अस्तं ननक्षे यस्मिञ्चाक्रन्दिवा नक्तं श्वथिता वैतसेन ।। *Rv.* X-95-4

Thrice a day, Purūravas, have you embraced me, you have loved me without a rival; I have followed (you) to your dwelling, you, hero, have been the sovereign of my person.<sup>7</sup>

**Purūravas :** Sujurnī, Śreṇi, Sumna-āpi, Hṛdecakṣus, Granthinī and the swift-moving Ūrvaśī who arrived they, decorated and purple-tinted did not go first, they lowed like mitch-cows for protections.<sup>8</sup>

**Ūrvaśī :** As soon as he was born the of the wives gods surrounded him, the spontaneously flowing rivers nourished him, for the gods reared you, Purūravas, for a mighty conflict, for the slaughter of the Dasyus.<sup>9</sup>

**Purūravas :** When, becoming there companion, Purūravas the mortal associated with these immortal nymphs who had abandoned their bodies, they fled from me like a timid doe, like horses harnessed to a chariot.<sup>10</sup>

When a mortal mixing with these immortal nymphs, has converse with them with words and actions, they becoming ducks, do not show their bodies like playful horses champing the bit.<sup>11</sup>

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7. त्रिः स्म माह्नः श्रन्थयो कैतसेनोत स्म मेऽव्यत्यै पृणासि ।

पुरुवरुवोऽनु ते केतमायं राजा मे वीर तन्वस्तदासीः ।। Rv. X-95-5

8. या सुजूर्णीः श्रेणिः सुम्नआपिहृदेचक्षुर्न ग्रन्थिनी चरण्युः ।

ता अज्जयोऽरुणयो न सस्तुः श्रिये गावो न धेनवेऽनवन्त ।। Rv. X-95-6

9. समस्मिज्जायमान आसत ग्ना उतेमवर्धन्नद्यःस्वगूर्ताः ।

महे यत्वा पुरुवरुवो रणायावर्धयन् दस्युहत्याय देवाः ।। Rv. X-95-7

10. सचा यदासु जहतीष्वत्कममानुषीषु मानुषो निषेवे ।

अप स्म मत्तरसन्ति न भुज्युस्ता अत्रसत्रथस्पृशो नाश्वाः ।। Rv. X-95-8

11. यदासु मर्तो अमृतासु निस्पृक्सं क्षोणीभिः क्रतुभिर्न पृङ्क्ते ।

ता आतयो न तन्वः शुम्भत स्वा अश्वासो न क्रिळयो दन्दशानाः ।। Rv. X-95-9

**Ūrvaśī** : She shone like flashing lighting, bringing me the desirable dewes of heaven, has appeared a son able in act and friendly to man has been born, Ūrvaśī has prolonged my lengthened existence.<sup>12</sup>

**Ūrvaśī** : You have been born thus to protect the earth; you have deposited this vigour in me; knowing (the future) I have instructed you what to do every day; you have not listened to me; why do you now address me, neglectful of my instruction.<sup>13</sup>

**Purūravas** : When shall a son born of you claim me as a father, and, crying, shed a tear on recognizing (me) ? what son shall sever husband and wife who are of one mind, now that the fire shines upon your husband's parents ?<sup>14</sup>

**Ūrvaśī** : Let me reply, your son will shed tears, crying out and calling aloud when the expected auspicious time arrives; I will send you that child which is yours in me, depart to your house you can not, simpleton, detain me.<sup>15</sup>

**Purūravas** : Your husband who sports with you may now (depart) never to return depart to proceed to a distant region. Either let him sleep upon the lap of *Nirṛti* or let the swift-moving wolves devour him.<sup>16</sup>

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12. विद्युन्न या पतन्ति दविहोद्धरन्ती मे अप्या काम्यानि ।

जनिष्टो अपो नर्यः सुजातः प्रोर्वशी तिरत दीर्घमायुः ॥ Rv. X-95-10

13. जज्ञिष इत्था गोपीध्याय हि दधाथ तत्पूरुरवो म ओजः ।

अशासं त्वा विदुषी सस्मिन्नहन्न म आशृणोः किमभुग्वदासि ॥ Rv. X-95-11

14. कदा सूनुः पितरं जात इच्छाच्चक्रन्नाश्रुवर्तयद्विजानन् ।

को दंपती समनसा वि यूयोदथ दयग्निः श्वशुरेषु दीदयत् ॥ Rv. X-95-12

15. प्रति ब्रवाणि वर्तयते अश्रु चक्रन्न क्रन्ददाध्ये शिवायै ।

प्र तत्ते हिनवा यत्ते अस्मे परेह्यस्तं नहि मूर मापः ॥ Rv. X-95-13

16. सुदेवो अद्य प्रपतेदनावृत्परावतं परमां गन्तवा उ ।

अथा शयीत निऋतेरुपस्थेऽधैनं वृका रभसासो अद्युः ॥ Rv. X-95-14

Ūrvaśī : Die not, Purūravas, fall not, let not the hideous wolves devour you. Female friendships do not exist, their hearts are the hearts of jackals.<sup>17</sup>

When changed in form I wandered amongst mortals, I dwelt with them four delightful years. I ate once a day a small quality of butter; satisfied with that I now depart.<sup>18</sup>

Purūravas : I, Vasiṣṭha, bring under subjection Ūrvaśī who fills the firmament with lustre and measures out the rain. May Purūravas, the bestower of the auspicious rite, abide near you; come back, my heart is burning.<sup>19</sup>

Ūrvaśī: These gods said to you, Aīla, since you are indeed subject to death, let your progeny propitiate your gods with oblations, you shall rejoice with me in heaven.<sup>20</sup>

### Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa : Version of Ūrvaśī-Purūrava Myth

The version of Ūrvaśī-Purūrava story as given in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa may be read with some modification of the Ṛgvedic version. In the ritual context, the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa uses parts of the material from the Ṛgveda with certain additions necessary for

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17. पुरुरवो मा मृथा मा प्र पप्नो मा त्वा वृकासो अशिवास उ क्षन् ।

न वै स्त्रैणानि सख्यानि सन्ति सालावृकाणां हृदयान्येता ॥ Rv. X-95-1533.

18. यद्विरूपाचरं मर्त्येष्ववसं रात्रीः शरदश्चतसत्रः ।

धृतस्य स्तोत्रं सकृदह्म आश्र्नां तादेवेदं तातृपाणा चरामि ॥ Rv. X-95-16

19. अन्तरिक्षप्रां रजसो विमानीमुप शिक्षाम्युर्वशीं वसिष्ठः ।

उप त्वा रातिः सुकृतस्य तिष्ठान्नि वर्तस्व हृदयं तप्यते मे ॥ Rv. X-95-17

20. इति त्वा देवा इम आहुरैळ यथेमेतद्भवसि मृत्युबन्धुः ।

प्रजा ते देवान् हविषा यजाति स्वर्ग उ त्वमपि मादयासे ॥ Rv. X-95-17

the ritual-symbolism. The story of Ūrvaśī and Purūravas as found in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (XI-5-1. 1 to 17) is as follows:

उर्वशी हाप्सराः पुरुरवसमैडं चकमे । तं ह विन्दमानोवाच - त्रिः स्म माहो वैतसेन दण्डेन हतात् । अकामां स्म मा निपद्यासै । मो स्म त्वा नग्नं दर्शम् । एष वै न स्त्रीणामुपचारः, इति । सा हास्मिन् ज्योगुवास । अपि हास्माद्र्भिण्यास तावज्ज्योग्घास्मिन्नुवास । ततो ह गन्धर्वाः समूदिरेज्योग्वा इयमुर्वशी मनुष्येष्ववात्सीत् । उप जानीतयथेयं पुनरागच्छेत्, इति । तस्यै ह अविर्द्धि-उरणा शयन उपबद्धास । ततो ह गन्धर्वा अन्यतरमुरणं प्रमेशुः । सा होवाच - अवीर इव बत मेऽजन इव पुत्रं हरन्ति, इति । द्वितीयं प्रमेशुः । सा ह तथैवोवाच । अथ हायमीक्षांचक्रे - कथं तु तदवीरं कथमजनं स्याद्यत्राहं स्याम्, इति । स नग्न एवानूत्पपात । चिरं तन्मेने यद्वासः पर्यधास्यत । ततो ह गन्धर्वा विद्युतं जनयाञ्चक्रुः । तं यथा द्विवैव नग्नं ददर्श । ततो हैवेयं तिरोबभूव । पुनरैमीत्येत्तिरोभूताम् । स आद्या जल्पन् कुरुक्षेत्रं समया चचार अन्यतःप्लक्षेतिबिसवति । तस्यै हाद्यन्तेनवव्राज । तद्ध ता अप्सरस आतयो भूत्वा परिपुप्लुविरे । तं हेयं ज्ञात्वोवाच - अयं वै स मनुष्यो यस्मिन्नहमवात्सम्, इति । ता होचुः - तस्मै वा आविरसाम, इति । तथा, इति तस्मै हाविरासुः । तां हायं ज्ञात्वाभिपरोवाद - घृतस्य स्तोत्रं सकृदन्न आश्नां तादेवेदं तातृपाणा चरामि ।। इति ।।

तदेतदुक्तप्रत्युक्तं पञ्चदशर्चं बह्वचाः प्राहुः । तस्यै ह हृदयमाव्ययाञ्चकार । सा होवाच - संवत्सरतमीं रात्रिमागच्छतात् । तन्म एकां रात्रिमन्ते शयितासे । जात उ तेऽयं तर्हि पुत्रो भविता, इति । स ह संवत्सरतमीं रात्रिमाजगामेद्धिरण्यविमितानि । तथो हैनमेवमूचुः - एतत्प्रपद्यस्व, इति । तद्धास्मै तामुपप्रजिध्युः । सा होवाच-गन्धर्व वै ते प्रातर्वरं दातारस्तं वृणासै, इति । तं वै मे त्वमेव वृष्णीष्व, इति युष्माकमेवैकोऽसानीति ब्रूतात्, इति । तस्मै ह प्रातर्गन्धर्वा वरं ददुः । स होवाच - युष्माकमेवैकोऽसानि, इति । ते होचुः-न वै सा मनुष्येष्वग्नेर्यज्ञिया तनूरस्ति ययेष्ट्वास्माकमेकः स्यात्, इति । तस्मै ह स्थाल्यामोप्याग्निं प्रददुः । अनेनेष्ट्वास्माकमेको भविष्यसि, इति । तं च ह कुमारं चादायावव्राज । सोऽरण्य एवाग्निं निधाय कुमारेणैव ग्राममेयाय । पुनरैमीत्येत्तिरोभूतम् । योऽग्निरश्वत्थं तं या स्थाली शमीं ताम् । स पुनर्गन्धर्वनियाय ।

ते होचुः - संवत्सरं चातुष्प्राश्यमोदनं पच । स एतस्यैवाश्वत्थस्य तिस्रस्तिस्त्र समीधो घृतेनान्वज्य समिद्धतीभिर्घृतवतिभिर्ऋग्भिरभ्याधत्तात् । स यस्ततोऽग्निर्जनिता स एव स भविता, इति । ते होचु - पुरोऽक्षमिव वा एतत् । आश्वत्थीमेवोत्तरारणीं कुरुष्व शमीमयीमधरारणिम् । स यस्ततोऽग्निर्जनिता स एव स भविता, इति । ते होचुः - परोक्षमिव वा एतत् । आश्वत्थीमेवोत्तरारणीं कुरुष्व आश्वत्थीमधरारणिम् । स यस्ततोऽग्निर्जनिता स एव स भविता, इति । स आश्वत्थीमेवोत्तरारणिं चक्रे । आश्वत्थीमधरारणिम् । स यस्ततोऽग्निर्जज्ञे स एव स आस । तेनेष्ट्वा गन्धर्वाणामेक आस । तस्मादाश्वत्थीमेवोत्तरारणिं कुर्वीताश्वत्थीमधरारणिम् । स यस्ततोऽग्निर्जायते स एव स भवति । तेनेष्ट्वा गन्धर्वाणामेको भवति ।

The rendering of this *Brāhmaṇa* text is as below :<sup>21</sup>

The nymph Ūrvaśī with amorous feelings desired Purūravas, the son of Iḍā. While wedding him, she said to him, “Three times a day shall you strike me with the cane-rod; shall not lie with me when I am not desiring; may not I see you naked. This indeed, is the way of behaviour with us women.”

She, then, dwelt with him for a long time. Moreover, she was with a foetus from him. Then the Gandharvas conversed mutually - “This Ūrvaśī stayed among the humans for a long time. Consider how she might come back.” Now to her bed was tied, a ewe, with her two lambs. Then the Gandharvas lifted away one lamb. She said, “Alas! They are lifting away my ‘son,’ as if this place be heroless; as if it be without a person.” They stole away the second. She, indeed, spoke in the same way.

Then Purūravas thought to himself, ‘How could it be heroless, how without a person, where I be!’ naked itself (as he was, in the night in his bed) he darted up (following them). Too long did he think if would be if he would wear a cloak! Then did the Gandharvas produce the lightning; (and) (she) saw him naked, as in the day itself. Then that moment itself, verily, she got out of sight - “Again do I come,” he said and went after the vanished Ūrvaśī. Wailing in metal agony, he roamed about the whole Kurukṣetra. There was a lotus-lake called *Anyataḥplakṣā* (situated beside a *Plakṣa* tree). Along its (her the name is feminine) bank he wandered. In it were the nymphs swimming becoming water-birds. Indeed, recognising him, she

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21. Tr. S.A.Dange, *Divine Hymns and Ancient Thought*, Vol.II, Navaranga Publication, New Delhi, pp-225-230.

(Ūrvaśī, in the form of a water-bird), spoke, “He, verily, is the man with whom I dwelt.” They indeed, said, ‘Let us be visible to him.’ “Be it so” (she said). To him they became visible. Recognising her he uttered in front of her.

Here, Ṛgvedic *mantras* are used (Ṛv.X-95-1,2,14,15,16).

It is this speech and counter speech (i.e conversation) that comprise fifteen verses, as the *Bahurcas* (the followers of the *Ṛgveda*) say. Indeed, her heart gave way (became soft and got oozing with feelings). She said, “Do come (here) on the yearly night. Then shall you lie with me for that one night. This one born there would certainly be your son.”

He verily came on the yearly night, to the golden dwelling (that sprang up at that place). Then did (they) the Gandharvas say to him- “Resort to this.” Then did they send her to him. She said, “The Gandharvas would grant you a boon in the morning; choose it.” “That, indeed, you alone choose on my behalf” he said (i.e. you instruct me what to choose). “Say-Let me be one amongst you” (said she). Him the Gandharvas granted a boon in the next morning. He said, “Let me be one amongst you.” They said, “verily that sacrifice-worthy form of fire is not among men, by sacrificing with which one would be one among us; (so) to him they gave fire, pouring it into a pan, saying, “By sacrificing with this you will be one among us.” Purūravas came back taking it and the boy (his son). Placing the fire in the forest itself, he came to the locality with the boy alone. Thinking ‘I shall come back again; he went back to it (that had now) disappeared.

What was the fire, that (now had become) the *Aśvattha*; what was the pan (now had become) the *Śami* tree! He again came back to the Gandharvas.

They said, “cook a mess (of boiled rice) sufficient for four (priests), for one year. Each time (i.e. at every cooking and offering to the priests), anointing with ghee three faggots of the *Aśvattha*, place them (in the fire) with *mantras* (from the *Ṛgveda*) having (the words) *Samidh* (kindling stick) and *ghṛta* (ghee) in them (on the fire used for cooking the mess). The fire that would be born therefrom will be the same (as has now disappeared). They, moreover, said. “But this is indeed esoteric. Prepare the upper *araṇī* (wooden slab) from *Aśvattha* alone and from the *Śami* the lower one. The fire that would be produced therefrom would be the same (the one lost)” They (again) said, “This is indeed, esoteric. Prepare the upper *araṇī* from *Aśvattha* itself and the lower one (also) from *Aśvattha* itself. The fire that would be produced therefrom would be the same.” He prepared the upper *araṇī* from *Aśvattha* itself; from the *Aśvattha* (itself) the lower one. The fire born therefrom was the same one. By offering with (into) it, he got to be one among the Gandharvas. Therefore, from the *Aśvattha* itself should be one prepare the upper *araṇī*; from the *Aśvattha* (alone) the lower one. The fire which is born there from became the same (ancient one, given by the Gandharvas). Offering with it, one becomes one with the Gandharvas.

The whole story of *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* runs in the same way of the *Ṛgvedic* version, except the addition that at the lamentation of Purūravas, Ūrvaśī consented to live with him once at the end of the year. In the *Ṛgvedic* version, there is no consideration for the



lamentation of the king. According to her promise, she met the king at the end of the year. During this night she suggested to the king that next morning, when the Gandharvas would arrive to take her away, he should request them to show him the way by which he too could become a Gandharva like them so as to be able to enjoy her company for ever. Purūravas acted according to her suggestions. Gandharvas suggested to him to worship the fire produced from the Śami wood. Purūravas performed the worship of the fire and attained the status of Gandharvas. Ultimately he met his beloved Ūrvaśī and enjoyed her company for a long time.

The Ṛgvedic version which does not concede even a night's stay with Ūrvaśī to Purūravas after their separation, is preserved in the *Bṛhaddevatā* and the *Sarvānukramaṇī*.

According to the *Bṛhaddevatā*, Indra, being jealous of Purūravas, ordered his *Vajra* to destroy Ūrvaśī's love for him.<sup>22</sup>

In the *Sarvānukramaṇī* of the *Ṛgveda*, Indra does not appear at all. In this version, the curse of Mitrā-Varuṇa is mentioned, owing to which Ūrvaśī had to go to the earth and live with Purūravas on certain conditions.<sup>23</sup>

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22. पुरुरवसी राजर्षाव् अप्सरास्तूर्वशी पुरा ।  
 न्यवसत्संविदं कृत्वा तस्मिन्धर्मं चचार च ॥  
 तया तस्य च संवासम् असूयन् पाकशासनः ।  
 पैतामहं चानुरागम् इन्द्रवच्चापि तस्य तु ॥  
 स तयोस्तु वियोगार्थं पार्श्वस्थं वज्रमब्रवीत् ।  
 प्रीतिं भिन्धि तयोर्वज्रं मम चेदिच्छसि प्रियम् ॥

Śaunaka, *Bṛhaddevatā*, VII 147 to 149 p-91

23. Kātyayana, *Sarvānukramaṇī*, *Rv.X-95*

### Ūrvaśī-Purūravas Story in Purāṇic Version

The Purāṇic version of Ūrvaśī-Purūravas story in the *Harivaṃśa Purāṇa*<sup>24</sup> corresponds to the Ṛgvedic gvedic version. According to this, the curse of Brahmā caused the fall of Ūrvaśī on the earth. It adds that in the course of her stay on the earth, she began to live with the king, Purūravas on certain conditions. Accordingly, on the violation of those conditions, she disappeared from the court of the king. In course of searching her out, the king wandered hither and thither. Once he met her in Kurukṣetra. She promised to meet him for a single night. Ūrvaśī while meeting him at night, suggested to him to seek the help of Gandharvas to attain to their status. Purūravas acted according to her suggestion. Gandharvas offered him a 'Agnisthālī' and asked him to perform a sacrifice. He took the 'Agnisthālī' and kept it in the forest and went to his house with his son. When he returned from his house he did not find 'Agnisthālī' there; he found an *Aśvattha* tree grown on a *Śami* tree. Gandharvas again suggested to him to make *Araṇī* out of the tree and produce fire by rubbing it. He did so and got the fire. He performed a sacrifice with the help of that fire and attained the status of a Gandharva.

The *Matsya Purāṇa*<sup>25</sup> and the *Padma Purāṇa*,<sup>26</sup> give another mould to the story. These *Purāṇas* drop the condition and introduce the curse of Bharata. The text of the story in both *Purāṇas* is quite identical. The main features of the story of the *Matsya Purāṇa* are as follows:

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24. *Harivaṃśa Purāṇa*, I-26, 1 to 49

25. Prof. H.H. Wilson, *Matsya Purāṇa*, 24, 10 to 32

26. *Padma Purāṇa*, *Sṛṣṭi Khāṇḍa*, XII.52 to 86

Purūravas was a close friend of Indra. He visited him daily. One day while he was returning from the court of Indra, he saw that the Apsaras (i.e. Ūrvaśī and Citralekhā) were being taken away by the demon Keśi. He heard their cry and hurried to their rescue. He defeated the demon Keśi, recovered them handed them over to Indra.

Once, a drama, '*Lakṣmi Svayamvara*' was staged under the direction of Bharata. Ūrvaśī was participant in it. She, while discharging the role of Lakṣmi, looked at the face of Purūravas and was fascinated by his personality. Consequently she forgot her action and uttered irrelevant words. For this fault of her, Bharata (the director), cursed her to fall on the earth in the form of a creeper. When pacified, he brought moderation to the curse to the extent that Purūravas would meet her there in the form of a ghost. As a result of this curse, Ūrvaśī came to the earth and bore eight sons to Purūravas.<sup>27</sup>

### **Rāmāyaṇa Version of Ūrvaśī-Purūravas Story**

The *Rāmāyaṇa* gives a different mould to this story. The gist of the *Rāmāyaṇa*<sup>28</sup> version of this story is as follows :

1. Once Mitra asked Ūrvaśī to come to him for sexual intercourse at a mutually agreed time, but she did not pay much attention to his request.
2. While she was playing in the Varuṇālaya, Varuṇa saw her and was enchanted by her beauty. He expressed his ardent desire

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27. *Matsya Purāṇa*, 24, 10 to 32

28. *Rāmāyaṇa*, VII.56 (chapter)

Ed. N. Ramaratnam, *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇam*, Madras, 1958, pp- 1033-1034

to cohabit with her. But when declined to offer herself to him, he discharged his semen in a jar.

3. When Ūrvaśī attended sage Mitra, the latter got encouraged with her misconduct and cursed her to fall from the heaven and go to the earth. Later on, when pacified, he proposed the modification that she should attend *Rājarṣi* Purūravas, the son of Budha. Due to this curse, Ūrvaśī came to the '*Prātisthāna*' and lived with Purūravas. She bore a son, Āyu, to him. When the period of her curse came to an end, she returned to the heaven.

In the *Rāmāyaṇa* version, the story drops all the conditions mentioned in the Vedic and the Purāṇic versions.

### **Ūrvaśī Purūravas Story in the Kathāsaritsāgara**

There is one more version of the story preserved in the *Kathāsaritsāgara*<sup>29</sup> of Somadeva. According to it, Ūrvaśī and Purūravas fell in love with each other at first sight in the '*Nandanavana*' of Indra. At the command of Viṣṇu, Indra brought about the union of the two, who thereafter went to live on the earth in the king's palace. Once, while Purūravas was witnessing Rambhā's dance in the heaven, he laughed at some mistake in her technique. Her teacher Tumburu became enraged and cursed him that he would be separated from his Ūrvaśī. Gandharvas thereupon removed Ūrvaśī from the king and the two lovers greatly grieved. Purūravas propitiated Viṣṇu, who freed him from Tumburu's curse and once more united him with Ūrvaśī.

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29. Somadeva, *Kathāsaritsāgara*, III. 4 to 30.

The Ṛgvedic story itself, from which all the different versions have originated, is undoubtedly only an exhalation of a popular fairy tale consisting of the following main parts :

1. A fairy from the other world falls in love with a human and seeks his company on the earth;
2. In order to be able to return to her home after a short sojourn (time), she puts him certain conditions, the violation of which would leave her free to abandon him;
3. The violation takes place as pre-planned, with the help of the Gandharvas, the friends of the fairy (nymph) and then she returns.
4. The mortal grieves and wanders in search of her until she appears before him only for a short while to impress upon his mind the inevitability of the situation owing to the natural frivolity and hard-heartedness of women.

The garb of a dramatic dialogue, including the names of the characters, and a few embellishments such as the arguments of the frustrated lover as also the vague promise of a meeting in the other world by the favour of the gods, were the work of Ṛgvedic poet.

Thus, the *Ākhyānas* of Śunaśśepa and Purūravas can be traced to the Ṛgvedic hymns or some ancient tradition reflected in the hymns. These hymns, by their dramatic quality, indicate the existence of the semi-dramatic and semi-epic *Ākhyāna* literature out of which grew the later historical epics and dramas.

## 7. Socio-historical Institutions in the Rgvedic Age

### The Grāma, Self-Contained :

A *Grāma* ordinarily connotes a settled and not a nomadic state of existence. The word *Grāma* is used in the sense of a village, in the Rgvedic *mantra*.<sup>1</sup> A *grāma* is consisted of a number of *grahas* (houses), tenanted by several families (*Kulas*). The families (*Kulas*) were living under the leadership of *Kulapas*.<sup>2</sup> The *Grāmanī*<sup>3</sup> was the leader of the village. Each *Kula* was subdivided into a number of householders or *Grahapatis*.<sup>4</sup> The mistress of the household was called *Grahapatni*.<sup>5</sup> The cows were kept within the compound of the house, as there is distinct mention of playful calves and children in the house.<sup>6</sup> The cows were passing the night in *Goṣṭhas* which were generally situated at a distance from the village.<sup>7</sup> The *Goṣṭhas* must have been well guarded from the attacks of robbers. (*Paracha*) In the Rgvedic period, the villages were surrounded by corn-fields (*kṣetras*). The fields were owned by the families in separate and well-marked holdings.<sup>8</sup> The fields were carefully measured off<sup>9</sup> and the deity presiding over, (*Kṣetrasya pati*) each field is referred to in the Rgveda.<sup>10</sup> On this connection, Macdonell and Keith say "from the evidence that the system of separate holdings already existed in early Vedic times."<sup>11</sup>

1. Rv. I- 44-10; 141-1; 149-4; 146-1 etc.
2. परि त्वासते निधिभिः सखाय कुलपा न ब्राजपतिं चरन्तम्। Rv. X-179-2.
3. क्षिणावन् ग्रामणीग्रमेति। Rv. X 107-5
4. वामं गृहपतिं नय। Rv. VI - 53-2.
5. गृहान् गच्छ गृहपत्नी यथासो। Rv. X- 85-26.
6. ते हर्म्येष्टाः शिशवो न शुभ्रा वत्सासो न प्रक्रीळिनः पयोधाः। Rv. VII- 56-16
7. नि गावो गोष्टे असदन्नि मृगासो अविक्षत। Rv. I - 191-4.
8. क्षेत्रं न रण्वमूचुषे। Rv. X -33-6.
9. क्षेत्रमिव वि मुमुस्ते जनेनैकं पात्रमृभवो जेहमानम्। Rv. I - 110-5.
10. Rv. IV - 37-1,2; VII - 35-10 etc.
11. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*. Vol I P-211.

The villages were “scattered over the country, some close together, some far apart, and were connected to roads.”<sup>12</sup>

The cows were taken out from the *Goṣṭhas* for pasture in the morning by the *Gopās* (protectors of cows) after the milch-cows had been milked.<sup>13</sup> In the evening, they were returning to the *Goṣṭhas* and milked again.<sup>14</sup> According to the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*,<sup>15</sup> cows were daily milking three times. Milking in the morning is called *Prātar-doha*, in the forenoon is *Samgava*, and in the evening *Sāyam-doha*. Milk was used thrice daily for offering into *gārhapatya-Agni* (the sacred household Fire). The ears of the cattle were marked to indicate ownership.<sup>16</sup>

A Vedic *grāma* was self-contained. The wants of the people, were supplied by the people themselves. They cultivated corns like barley (*yava*),<sup>17</sup> rice (*dhānya*)<sup>18</sup> etc. The grains were stored in granaries (*stivis*).<sup>19</sup>

The *Rgvedic* people used to prepare curds, ghee, *dadhya-śira* from the milk.<sup>20</sup> Meat also was used for food.<sup>21</sup> Sheep’s wool is spun into yarn and woolen clothes were woven with them. The loon is called *tantra*.<sup>22</sup> Each family also wave the cloths required for its

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12. Ibid., p-24.

13. इनो विश्वस्य भुवनस्य गोपाः स मा धीरः पाकमत्रा विवेश । *Rv.* I - 164-21.

14. गाव इव ग्रामं यूयुधिरिवाश्वान्वाश्वेव वत्सं सुमना दुहाना । *Rv.* X- 149-4.

15. *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, VII - 5-3-1.

16. न ता नशन्ति न दधाति तस्करो नासामामित्रो व्याथिरा दधर्षति । *Rv.* VI-28-3.

17. *Rv.* V-85-3; X- 69-3; 131-2 etc.

18. *Rv.* V-53-13 ; VI - 13-4; X-94- 13 etc.

19. ऊपे यवमिव स्थिविभ्यः । *Rv.* X- 68-3.

20. *Rv.* I-162-13

21. *Rv.* V-27-5

22. सिरीस्तन्त्रं तन्वतो अप्रजज्ञयः । *Rv.* X-71-9.

ordinary use and the weaving is usually entrusted to and done by the women.<sup>23</sup> It is distinctly said in one *mantra* that the mother wove cloths for her sons.<sup>24</sup> There were men who learnt the art of weaving, took it up as a profession and they were called *Vāya* (weavers).<sup>25</sup>

The carpenters (*tvaṣṭr* ; *takṣa*)<sup>26</sup> were made chariots, wheels, boats, and wooden vessels (*druṇa*). The Smiths (*Karmāra*)<sup>27</sup> were made agricultural implements and weapons for war. The potters were making pots and vessels for daily uses. The *Ṛgveda* mentions *Kalaśa*,<sup>28</sup> *Kumbha*,<sup>29</sup> *Ukhā*<sup>30</sup> etc. The goldsmiths were made gold ornaments like *nikṣa*,<sup>31</sup> *Kaṇśobhana*,<sup>32</sup> *rukma*<sup>33</sup> etc. There were also men whose profession it was to make flower-garlands or wreaths.<sup>34</sup> It must have been in great requisition among fashionable and luxurious people.

The skin materials were also manufactured in the *Ṛgvedic* age. The tanner is known by the name of *Carmamna*.<sup>35</sup> Barbors (*Vaptā*)<sup>36</sup> are also mentioned in the *Ṛgveda*. The physicians (*bhīṣak*)<sup>37</sup> claimed a scientific knowledge, so far it went in the *Ṛgvedic* days, and he prepared the various herbs and drugs.

23. *Rv.* II - 3-6; 38-4 ; V- 47-6 , etc.

24. अपांसि वस्त्रा पुत्राय मातरो वपन्ति । *Rv.* VI- 47-6.

25. *Rv.* X-26-6 ; 106-1.

26. *Rv.* X-119-5 ; *Rv.* IX - 112 -1.

27. *Rv.* IX - 112-2 ; X - 72-2.

28. *Rv.* I- 117-12 ; iii- 32-15.

29. *Rv.* I - 116-7 ; 117 - 6. etc.

30. *Rv.* I - 162 - 13 ; 15 ; III - 53-22.

31. *Rv.* VIII - 47 - 15 ; 78 - 3.

32. *Rv.* VII-78--3

33. *Rv.* V-53-4; I-166-10 etc.

34. स्रजं वा दुहितर्दिवः । *Rv.* VIII - 47 - 15.

35. *Rv.* VIII - 5 - 38

36. शोचिर्वसेव श्मश्रु वपसि प्र भूम । *Rv.* X- 142-4.

37. कारूरहं ततो भिषगुपलप्रक्षिणी नना । *Rv.* IX - 112 - 3.



In the absence of flowing rivers, water was supplied from wells.<sup>38</sup> The water was raised from wells by means of a stone-wheel (*aśmacakram*)<sup>39</sup> to which pots were attached. There is also a mention of people digging lakes for the purpose of supplying pure drinking water,<sup>40</sup> as well as natural lakes having full-blown white lotuses on their bosom. (*Puṣkariṇī*).<sup>41</sup> The washing of the clothes was done by the householders themselves, though the work had been strangely ascribed to the god Pūṣan.<sup>42</sup>

The musicians were also living in the village of the *Ṛgvedic* country. Some of musical instruments are mentioned in the *Ṛgveda*. viz., *dundubhī*,<sup>43</sup> *Vāṇa*, *Karkaī*, *Kṣoṇī*, etc. These instruments were used in the festive occasions as well as in wars. From this account, it shows that a *Ṛgvedic Grāma* (village) was completely self-continued and supplied all the ordinary wants of its inhabitants.

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38. त्रितः कूपोः वहितो देवान्हवत ऊतये । *Rv.* I - 105 - 17.

39. द्रोणाहावमवत मश्मचक्रं सत्रकोशं सिज्वता नृपाणम् । *Rv.* X - 101 - 7.  
X- 93-73.

40. शर्याभिर्न भरमाणो गभस्त्योः । *Rv.* IX - 110 - 5.

41. आयने ते परायणे दूर्वा रोहन्तु पुष्णिणीः । हृदयश्च पुण्डरीकणि समुद्रस्य गृहा इमे । *Rv.* X-142-8.

42. आधीषमाणायाः पतिः सुचायाश्च ।

वासोवायोऽवीनामा वासंसि मर्मृजत् ।। *Rv.* X- 26-6.

43. *Rv.* I - 28-5 ; VI - 47-29, 31 etc.

### Family Life :

The *R̥gveda* points to a highly organised society. The foundation of social life was patriarchal family. The father was the head of the family and controlling all the activities of his children, including, in some measure at least, their marriage. The prayers were sent up to the Gods for the birth of children in house and for their long life and prosperity.<sup>1</sup> The sons were coveted not only for the continuity and prolongation of the family line, but also for the spiritual benefit of the dead ancestors who were eager for the oblations offered to them by their lineal descendants.<sup>2</sup> Some times, when there was no issue, sons were adopted by a stretch of the legal fiction; but no real pleasure was felt in these sons, as there was no blood relation with adoptive parents, and sometimes returned to the original family to which they belonged.<sup>3</sup>

The ideal son of the seers, is spoken of in the hymn forty-seven of the tenth *maṇḍala*. The sons merits are mentioned in the *R̥gveda*.<sup>4</sup>

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1. यमश्वी नित्यमुपयाति यज्ञं प्रजावन्तं स्वपत्यं क्षयं नः।स्वजन्मना शेषसा वावृधानम्॥ *R̥v.* VII - 1-12.  
यो न वयं सहसावन्मदेमाविक्षितास आयुषा सुवीराः। *R̥v.* VII - 1-24.  
विश्वा सत्तोसृभयो गृणते च सन्तु यूयं पात स्वस्तिभिः सदानः। *R̥v.* VIII - 4- 10.
  2. मो षु देवाः अदः स्व ख पादि दिवस्हरि।  
मा सोम्यस्य शुंभुवः शूने भूम कदा चन वित्तं मे अस्य रोदसी॥ *R̥v.* I- 105-3.
  3. *R̥v.* VII-4- 7,8.  
परिषद्यं ह्यरण्यस्य रेएकणो नित्यस्य रायः पतयः स्याम।  
न शोषो अग्ने अन्यजातम त्स्यचेतानास्य मा पथो वि दुक्षः॥  
न हि ग्रभायारणः सुशेवोऽन्योदर्यो मनसा मन्तवा उ।  
अद्या चिदोकः पुनरित्स एत्या नो वाज्यभीषाळेतु नव्यः॥
  4. *R̥v.* X-42-3,4,5.

The seer Dyumna, prayed for a son who would be glorious by defeating his enemies in the battle.<sup>5</sup> In another place, the seer Śunahotra Bhāradvāja, prayed for a son who would be mighty, delight-giving, performer of sacrifices, and bestower of gifts, and who, riding on a brave steeds, would successfully encounter his enemies riding on brave steeds in battle.<sup>6</sup> Here, A.C. Das observes “It would appear that the sons were trained up not only to be learned, pious and self-supporting, but also to be brave and heroic men who would be able to hold their own against their enemies.”<sup>7</sup>

The grown-up sons always kept their father’s company, sat with him in his room for receiving instructions.<sup>8</sup> Sometimes they were sent to the house of a professional preceptor who imported to them true knowledge with a view to develop their manhood.<sup>9</sup> In the Ṛgvedic times, the father had absolute power over the life and limb of his son, and could inflict on him corporeal punishment even to the extent of maiming or blinding him for serious offences. It is related in the Ṛgvedic *mantras*, that the seer Vṛṣā-giri blinded his son Rjṛāśva for destroying one hundred sheep belonging to their co-villagers, though his eye-sight was afterwards restored through the grace of the Aśvins (nāsatyas).<sup>10</sup>

5. *Rv.* V- 23- 1,2.

अग्ने सहन्तमा भर द्युन्मस्य प्रासहा रयिम् ।

विश्वा यश्चर्षणीरभ्या सा वाजेषु सासहत् ।।

तमग्ने पृतनाषहं रयिं सहस्व आ भर ।

त्वं हि सत्यो अभुतो दाता वाजस्य गोमतः ।।

6. य ओजिष्ठा इन्द्र तं सु नो दा मदो वृशन्त्व भिष्टिर्दास्विम् ।

सौवश्यं यो वनवत्स्वशो वृत्रा समत्सु सासहदमित्रान् ।। *Rv.* VI-33-1.

7. A.C. Das. *Rgvedic culture*, p - 241.

8. पुरः सदः शर्मसदो न वीरा अनवद्या पतिजुष्टेव नारी । *Rv.* I- 73-3.

9. युवोर्दानाय सुभरा असश्चतो रथमा तस्थुर्वचसं न मन्तवे ।

याभिर्धियोऽवथः कर्मन्निष्टये ताभिरू षु ऊतिभिरशिना गतम् ।। *Rv.* I - 112-2.

10. शातं मेषान्वृक्ये चक्षदानमृज्राश्वं तं पिताधं चकार ।

तस्मा अक्षी नासत्या विचक्ष आधत्तं दस्त्रा भिषजावनर्वन् ।। *Rv.* I - 116 - 16 .

After son's marriage, his wife then became the mistress of the house. The *Vivāha-Sūkta* of the *R̥gveda* mentions that the young wife has been enjoined to exercise authority over her husband's father, mother, sisters and brothers.<sup>11</sup>

### The Wife :

The great seer Viśvāmitra declares that '*Jāyedaṣṭam*,' the wife is the home. In his vision, the wife is true source of domestic felicity.<sup>12</sup> As it was quite natural to attribute the same source of happiness to the gods as to men, it was conjectured that Indra had a happy home, presided over by a good, gracious and loving wife, which rang with the dulcet music of her sweet voice and the merry laughter of the children. The Seer Viśvāmitra addresses Indra thus:<sup>13</sup>

"When you have drunk the soma, then, Indra, go home, an auspicious life pleasantly in your dwelling in either case there is the standing in your car or liberating the steeds of provender."

The wife is dressed herself well and gracefully<sup>14</sup> and always put on a smiling countenance with a view to please her husband. She carefully arranged his seat and bed, and looked after his comforts.<sup>15</sup>

The wife is not only a loving wife, but a loving mother also. She is fond of her children whom she loved as a mother only could love

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11. साम्राज्ञी श्वशुरे भव साम्राज्ञी श्वश्रवां भव ।

ननान्दरि साम्राज्ञी भव साम्राज्ञी आधि देवेषु ॥ *Rv.* X- 85- 46.

12. *Rv.* III - 53 - 4.

13. *Rv.* III - 53 - 6.

14. *Rv.* IV - 3 - 2; IV - 58-9.

15. *Rv.* IV-3-2.

them and nursed and brought them up with great care.<sup>16</sup> The playful and blooming little darlings were formed the chief attraction of the home.<sup>17</sup> The little son caught the hem of his father's garments with a view to attract his attention and press his supplication with earnest and lovable words.<sup>18</sup> The picture of the mother sitting with her little sons on her lap was indeed very lovely, and as well as that of tumbling urchins advancing towards the father with broken and lisping words pleasant to hear.<sup>19</sup> The boys and the girls wore golden ear-rings and bejeweled necklaces.<sup>20</sup>

The wife is described in the *Rgveda* as the ornaments of the home.<sup>21</sup> She was an excellent house-wife, rising early with the dawn, and rousing all from sleep, and sending the servants about their respective business.<sup>22</sup> She bathed early morning and offered jointly with her husband the morning oblations to the sacred household fire. Another oblation was offered in the mid-day and third in the evening.<sup>23</sup> Her first and foremost duty was to keep the sacred fire burning.

Sometimes the young daughters took charge of the little ones and duly fed and nursed them. After mid-day meals, she used to attend to her toilette, dress herself and the children neatly with a view to meet her husband. She used to prepare meals for the evening, make beds for the children and put them early to sleep.<sup>24</sup> Often,

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16. *Rv.* VII-81-4.

17. *Rv.* VII-56-16.

18. *Rv.* III-53-2.

19. *Rv.* VII-43-3; VII-103-3.

20. *Rv.* I-122-14.

21. *Rv.* I-66-3.

22. *Rv.* I-124-4.

23. *Rv.* I-173-2; III-28; V-43-15; VIII-1-29; 13-13. etc.

24. *Rv.* I-123-11; 124-7; IV-3-2; 58-9, etc.



she had male and female servants under her, whom she employed in their respective duties and treated kindly.<sup>25</sup>

She also looked after the cows other domestic animals and supervised the work entrusted to their keepers.<sup>26</sup> Occasionally, accompanied by other women, she rambled about and claimed the hills to pluck flowers.<sup>27</sup> She was dutiful to her husband's parents, affectionate to her husband's brothers and sisters, and devotedly attached to her husband.<sup>28</sup>

In the Ṛgvedic age domestic felicity was depended upon the mutual harmony of husband and wife and upon their pious performance of the religious duties they owed to the gods.

#### **Samśkāras in the Ṛgveda :**

Oldest document of the religious literature of the Indo-Aryans is certainly the *Ṛgveda*. Yet, the *Ṛgveda* is not complete in itself to provide all details of that aspect. There are a few specific Ṛgvedic hymns which are particularly concerned with popular rites and ceremonies. The wedding (*vivāha*),<sup>29</sup> the funeral (*Antyeṣṭi*)<sup>30</sup> and the conception (*Garbhādhāna*)<sup>31</sup> are described in the Ṛgvedic hymns. The Ṛgvedic descriptions may not be ritualistically exact but they are historically accounted for. The later-day *Samśkāras*, the *Vivāha*, the *Antyeṣṭi* and the *Garhādhāna* were direct descendants of these hymns. Then, there are those hymns of the *Ṛgveda* that are of general

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25. *Ṛv.* X-85-43.

26. *Ṛv.* X-85-44.

27. *Ṛv.* I-56-2.

28. *Ṛv.* X-85-46; IV-58-8. etc.

29. *Ṛv.* X - 85.

30. *Ṛv.* X- 14, 16, 18.

31. *Ṛv.* X - 183, 184.

applicability in the sacramental rituals. They are recited at different occasions, which show that they were not originally composed for a particular *Sam̐skāra*. But their connection with popular ceremonies cannot be denied altogether. Again, in the *Gṛhyasūtras* many citations homonymous to the Vedic *mantras*. This fact indicates that a large number of the items of the *Sam̐skāras* were suggested by the Vedic *mantras* in question and they originated in the later Vedic and post-Vedic period.

The Ṛgvedic hymns were composed with the inspirations for invoking the help of gods in events, public and private, that immediately interested the Ṛgvedic people. There are invocations relating to a life of hundred years with children and grand children, securing wives, children<sup>32</sup> and other domestic articles,<sup>33</sup> and the destruction of the demon who kills offsprings.<sup>34</sup> These and similar references have a great correspondence with the *Sam̐skāras* that were performed at the various important occasions in the life of a man. Besides, there are other references in the *Ṛgveda* that bear on the social aspects of the *Sam̐skāras*. For example, it was difficult to secure a husband for a brotherless girl. "Like a woman growing old in her parents house."<sup>35</sup> Different forms of marriages are also hinted at. viz. *Rākṣasa*, *Brāhma*, *Āsura-vivāha* etc. The *Ṛgveda* prescribes the time for *Sam̐skaras*.<sup>36</sup> As regards the details and regulations of

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32. शतमित्रु शरदो अन्ति देवा यत्रा नश्चक्रा जरसं तनूनां ।

पुत्रासो यत्र पितरो भवन्ति मा नो मध्यारीरिषतायुर्गन्तोः ।। *Rv.* I - 89 - 9.

33. पिबसं च तृत्तुते चा च गच्छतं प्रजां च दत्तं द्रविणं च दत्तम् । *Rv.* VIII - 35 - 10.

34. *Rv.* X - 162.

35. अमाजूरिव पित्रो सचा सती समानाधा सदसत्त्वामिये भगम् । *Rv.* II - 17 - 7.

36. आत्मशरीरन्यतरनिष्ठो विहित क्रियाजन्योऽतिशय विशेषः संस्कारः ।

*Vīramitrodaya - Sam̐skāra Prakāśa*. Q. Rajbali Pandey, *Hindu Sam̐skāras*, P - 17.

the *Sam̐skāras*, it must be confessed that the R̥gvedic hymns do not contain positive rules. They contain many incidental references which throw light on the *Sam̐skāras*.

The word *Sam̐skāra* defies every attempt at its correct translation into English. Ceremony or Latin caerimonia does not give the full meaning of this word. The word *Sam̐skāra* is derived from the Sanskrit root 'Sam̐+skṛ+ghañ' and is used in a variety of ways.

The Hindu *Sam̐skāras* combine a number of preliminary considerations and rites and other accompanying regulations and observances, all aiming at not only the formal purification of the body but at sanctifying, impressing, refining and perfecting the entire individuality of the recipient. The *Sam̐skāras* with their paraphernalia were regarded as producing a peculiar indefinable kind of merit for the man who underwent them and the person becomes endowed with a peculiar excellence due to the rites ordained by the *Śāstrās*. It was in this collective sense that the word *Sam̐skāra* is used. The word 'Sam̐skāra' does not occur in the Vedic and *Brāhmaṇa* literature.

The *Gr̥hyasūtras* generally deal with the bodily *Sam̐skāras* beginning with *Vivāha* and ending with *Samāvartana*. They fluctuate from twelve to eighteen and the lists are slightly varying in names of some particular *Sam̐skāras* or in some additions and omissions. According to the *Paddhatis* and the *Prayogas*, the funeral is always treated separately. The usual number of the *Sam̐skāras* in them is from ten to thirteen from *Garbhādhāna* to *Vivāha*. Many of the *Paddhatis* are actually called "The *Daśakarma-Paddhatis*."<sup>37</sup> At

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37. The *Daśakarmapaddatīs* of Gaṇapati, Marayana, Pṛthvidhara, Bherdeva etc.



present, sixteen are the most popular *Samśkāras*, though the enumeration differ in different books.

### The Garbhādhāna (conception)

Śaunaka gives the definition of the *garbhādhāna* in these words: “the rite by the performance of which a woman receives semen scattered (by her husband) is called *Garbhāmbana* or *Garbhādhāna*.”<sup>38</sup> In the beginning, procreation was a natural act. A human pair copulated, whenever there was a physical demand for it, without any anticipation of progeny, though it was a usual consequence. The *Garbhādhāna Samśkāra*, however, presupposes a well established home, a regular marriage, a desire of possessing children and a religious ideal for which, beneficent gods help men in begetting children.

In the Vedic period, the parental instincts found their expression in many utterance containing prayers for children.<sup>39</sup> Heroic sons were regarded as boons conferred by gods on men. The theory of three debts was in the process of evolution in the Vedic period.<sup>40</sup> A son was called ‘*Rṇacyuta*’<sup>41</sup> or one who removes debts, which may denote both parental and economic growth, and the begetting of children was regarded a sacred duty binding on every individual. Thus an idea of simple ceremony regarding conception had come into existence in the Vedic period.

38. निशिक्षो यत्प्रयोगेण गर्भः सन्धार्यते स्त्रिया । तद् गर्भसम्भनं नाम कर्म प्रोक्तं मनीषिभिः ।।

*Vīramitrodaya - Samśkāra Prakāśa*. Q. Rajbali Pandey, *Hindu Samśkāras*. p -48.

39. पुत्रासो यत्र पितरो भवन्ति । *Rv.* I - 89-9.

40. जयमानो वै ब्राह्मणस्त्रिभिर्ऋणवान् जायते ब्रह्मचर्येण ऋषिभ्यो यज्ञेन देवेभ्यः प्रजया पितृभ्यः ।

एष वा अनृणो यः पुत्री यज्वा ब्रह्मचारी वा स्यादिति ।। *Taittirīya saṁhitā*. VI - 3-10-5.

41. *Rv.* X - 142 - 6.

The ritual procedure adopted in the *Garbhādhāna* had assumed a fairly ceremonious shape before the codification of the *Samśkāras* in the *Gr̥hyasūtras*. They do not give an exact information about it in the Ṛgvedic period. Yet there are many *mantras* in the *Ṛgveda* pointing to the act of conception. The *mantras* describes as follows:<sup>42</sup>

“May Viṣṇu construct the womb, may Tvaṣṭṛ fabricate the members, may Prajāpati sprinkle the seed, may Dhātṛ cherish your embryo.

Sustain the embryo, *Sinīvālī*, sustain the embryo, Sarasvatī, may the divine Aśvins, garlanded with lotuses, sustain your embryo.

We invoke your embryo which the Aśvins have churned with the golden pieces of touchwood, that you may bring it forth in the tenth month.”

The description of actual copulation are also found in the *Ṛgveda*. This *mantra* is as under : <sup>43</sup>

“Pūṣan, inspire her who is most auspicious, in whom men may sow seed, who most affectionate may be devoted to us and in whom animated by dicer we may beget progeny.”

In the Ṛgvedic period, usually the husband was the natural performer of this *Samśkāra*. But in his absence (dead) substitutes were also allowed. Levirate was current in ancient times, because it

42. *Rv.* X- 184 -1,2,3

विष्णुर्योनिं कल्पयतु त्वष्टा रूपाणि पिंशतु ।  
आ सिञ्चतु प्रजापतिर्धाता गर्भं ददातु ते ।  
गर्भं देहि सिनीवालि गर्भं देहि सरस्वती ।  
गर्भं ते आश्विनौ देवावा धत्तां पुष्करस्त्रजा ।  
हिरण्ययी अरणी यं निर्मन्थतो अश्विना ।  
तं ते गर्भं हवामहे दशमे मासि सूतवे ॥

43. तां पूषन् शिवतमा मेरयस्व यस्यां बीजं मनुष्याः वपन्ति ।

या न ऊरू उशर्ती विश्रयातो यस्यामुशन्तः प्रहराम शेफम् ॥ *Rv.* X - 85 - 37.

was necessary to beget children at any cost for the benefit of the family and the dead fathers. The *R̥gveda* mentions - 'a widow invites her husband's brother to raise children for her husband.'<sup>44</sup> *Manu*<sup>45</sup> and many other *Sm̐rtis* allow the widow to bear children from the brother of her husband, a *Sagotra* or a *Brāhmaṇa*.<sup>46</sup>

The *Puṁsavana* and the *Sīmantonayana Samiskāras* are not found in the *R̥gvedic mantras*.

### **Jātakarma (Birth ceremonies)**

The word 'Janman' occurs thrice in the *R̥gveda*.<sup>47</sup> But it is used in the sense of relation. Besides, the context in which it is used shows that the passages where the word occurs have nothing to do with any ceremony like it. In the *Atharvaveda*, however, there is one full hymn containing prayers and spells for easy and safe delivery. Then, in the *Gṛhyasūtras* this *Samiskāra* is fully described.

### **Nāmakaraṇa (Name-giving) :**

The word 'Nāman' is a common occurrence in the Sanskrit literature and is found even in the *R̥gveda*,<sup>48</sup> the earliest work of the Āryans. Names of objects and persons are found in the Vedic literature. Other peculiar names suggested in the *Sūtras* and the *Sm̐rtis* are also found in the Vedic and *Brāhmaṇa* literature. The *R̥gveda* recognizes a secret name, the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* and the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* as well refer to it. But the practice, as given in

44. को वां शयुत्रा विधवेव देवरं मर्यं न योषा कृणुते सधस्थ आ । *Rv.* X - 40 - 2.

45. देवराद्वा सपिण्डाद्वा स्त्रिया सम्यङ्नियुक्तया ।

जेप्सिताधिगन्तण्या सन्तानस्य परीक्षये ।। *Manusm̐rti*, IX - 59.

46. बीजार्थं ब्राह्मणः कश्चिद्धनेनोपनिमनत्र्यताम् । *Mahābhārata*, *Ādiparva*.

47. *Rv.* VII-33-10; 11-26-3.

48. *Rv.* X-35-2; X-71-1. etc.

the Sutras, of giving a secret name after the *Nakṣatra* name is nowhere instanced in the Vedic literature.

Praises of food are found in the Vedas and *Upaniṣads*, but whether they were sung at an ordinary dinner or on the occasion of the first feeding of the child is doubtful. The ceremony of feeding the child for the first time put on its proper ritualistic garb during the *Sūtra* period.

Almost all the *mantras* that are used in the *Gṛhyasūtras* at the *Chūḍākaraṇa* ceremony are found in the Vedic literature. But, they are all of specific character which show that they were composed for the purpose of cutting the hair only. Wetting the head for tonsure is mentioned in the *Atharvaveda*.<sup>49</sup> The shaving razor is praised and requested to be harmless; In the *Yajurveda*, cutting the hair by the father himself for abundance of food, progeny, wealth and strength is also referred to.<sup>50</sup> Many other mythological allusions to hair-cutting are given in the Vedas. So it is quite clear that the *Chūḍākaraṇa* was a religious ceremony as early as in the Vedic period.

The *Samiskāras* like *Vidyārambha*, *Vedārambha*, *Upanayana*, *Keśānta* and *Samāvartana* *Samiskāras*- are of course not found in the *Ṛgveda*, while the *Gṛhyasūtra* deal with them.

### **The Marriage**

It is important to note that even at the *Ṛgvedic* age, the marriage was a fully developed social institution and accepted as such. The marriage was deemed necessary not merely for gratifying the natural

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49. *Atharvaveda*, VI-68-1.

50. *Yajurveda*, III-63.

urge but also for setting up a happy home and begetting progeny to continue traditions of religion and culture. The Ṛgvedic seers clearly state the purpose and significance of this basic institution.

The aim of marriage as conceived by the Ṛgvedic seers is to get a son, who is skilled in activities (*Karmaṇya*), proficient in house-hold duties (*Sadanya*), performer of sacrifices (*Vidātya*), deserving a position in the assembly of the learned (*Sabheya*), and one who will bring fame to the family (*Pitrśravaṇa*).<sup>51</sup> Further, the Ṛgvedic seers urge upon the gods to grant all possible happiness to the married couple.<sup>52</sup> It is significant that the young couple are advised to cultivate mutual love and confidence so necessary for attaining, maintaining domestic harmony which is the basis of social and national betterment.

However, *Ṛgveda* does not mentions any reference to the child-marriage. A girl must be fully developed physically in her father's house (*pitṛśadam*).<sup>53</sup> In the *Vivāha-Sūkta* of *Ṛgveda*, "the bride Sūryā became youthful and yearned for a husband," is mentioned.<sup>54</sup> It shows that in the Ṛgvedic period the girls were married long after they had reached puberty.

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51. सोमो धेनुं सोमो अर्वन्तमाशुं सोमो वीरं कर्मण्यं ददाति ।  
सादन्यं विदध्यं सभेयं पितृश्रवणं यो ददाशदस्मै ॥ *Ṛv.* I-91-20  
तन्नस्तुरीपमध पोषयितु देव त्वष्टर्वि रराणः स्यस्व ।  
यतो वीरः कर्मण्यः सुदक्षो युक्तग्रावा जायते देवकामः ॥ *Ṛv.* III-IV-90
52. या दंपती समनसा सुनुत आ च धावतः ।  
देवासो नित्ययाशिरा ॥ *Ṛv.* VIII-31-5  
वीतिहोत्रा कृतद्वसू दशस्यन्तामृताय कम् ।  
समूधो रोमशं हतो देवेषु कृणुतो दुवः ॥ *Ṛv.* VIII-31-9
53. अन्यमिच्छ पितृषदं व्यक्तां स ते भागो जनुषा तस्य विद्धि । *Ṛv.* X-85-21  
According to Sāyaṇa the word 'पितृषदं' means 'पितृपदं व्याख्यातम् ।'
54. सोमो वधूयुरभवदश्विनास्तामुभा वरा ।  
सूर्या यत्पत्ये शंसन्तीं मनसा सविताददात् ॥ *Ṛv.* X-85-9  
पत्ये शंसन्तीं ; explained by Sāyaṇa as - पतिं कामयमानं पर्याप्तया युवानाम् ।

The girls had a considerable freedom in the choice of their husbands. A respectable girls always used to select from among her suitors one, whom she really loved, as true love is considered the real basis of happiness.<sup>55</sup>

There are references in the *R̥gveda*, to the idea that a bride price to be given was not very desirable to son-in-law. Similarly, dowry was given when the girl had some physical defect.<sup>56</sup>

### Forms of the Marriage :

It may be noted that in the *R̥gvedic* age, several forms of the marriage were developed. One form is usually based on mutual consent, though the final approval of the brother or parents is necessary. The marriage of Sūryā with Soma, as described in the *Vivāha-Sūkta* of the *R̥gveda*, is the prototype of the *Brāhma Vivāha*. In the case of the Sūryā's marriage, the Aśvins worked on behalf of Soma.<sup>57</sup> The *Sm̐rtis* have regarded it as the most honourable type of marriage. Manu says- "the girl was given by the father, with such ornaments as he could afford, to a man of character and learning, he invited voluntarily and respectfully without taking anything in return."<sup>58</sup>

As it is free from physical force, carnal appetite, impositions of conditions and lure of money. Here, the social decency was fully observed and religious consideration taken into account. This form

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55. कियती योषा मर्यतो वधूयोः परिप्रीता पन्यसा वार्येण ।

भद्रा वधूर्भवति यत्सुपेशाः स्वयं सा मित्रं वनुते जने चित् ॥ *R̥v.* X-27-12

56. अश्रवं हि भूरिदावत्तरा वां विजामातुरुत वा धा स्यालात् *R̥v.* I-109-2

57. यदयातं शुभस्पती वरेयं सूर्यामुप ।

क्वैकं चक्रं वामासीत्क्व देष्ट्राय तस्थतुः ॥ *R̥v.* X-85-15

अनृक्षरा ऋजवः सन्तु पन्था येभिः सखायो यन्ति नो वरेयम् ।

समर्यमा सं भगो नो निनियात्सं जास्पत्यं सुयममस्तु देवाः । *R̥v.* X-85-23

58. आच्छाद्य चार्चयित्वा च श्रुतिशीलवते स्वयम् ।

आहूय दानं कन्याया ब्रह्मो धर्मः प्रकीर्तितः । *Manusm̐rti*, III-27

is still current and the most popular in India, though it has been prostituted with the morbid stipulation of dowry.

Another form of marriage i.e., *Rākṣasa* i.e., marriage by stealing or capture was prevalent. But this was not much vogue in the Ṛgvedic period. In the instance of the *Ṛgveda*, the seer Vimada carried off Purumitra's daughter Śundhyu, against Purumitra's will. It is said that the Aśvins conveyed her in their chariot to her husband.<sup>59</sup> It appears that there was no violence pure, but that the affair was pre-arranged with the consent of the bride who refused to be directed by her parents. This former's consent is a fact which distinguishes such instances of capture and elopement of the bride from *Rākṣasa* method of marriage.

According to Manu "capture of a girl by force while she is crying and weeping, having killed, scattered and injured her relatives is called *Rākṣasa-Vivāha*."<sup>60</sup> Manu regards the *Rākṣasa* marriage form, commendable for the Kṣatriyas.<sup>61</sup> In the *Mahābhārata*,<sup>62</sup> Bhīṣma also calls it the best form for the warrior class.

The *Ṛgveda* traces to the form of '*Gandharva Vivāha*' also. In the *Ṛgveda*, a *mantra* refers that : "You Indra, are manifest, from the time to time you water the earth : Indra pervades all existence : the ancient Indra verily destroys his foe the other does not destroy. The limited two heaven and earth surpass not him who extends beyond the confines of the universe."<sup>63</sup>

59. युवं रथेन विमदाय शुन्धुवं न्यूहतुः पुरुमित्राय योषणाम् ।

युवं हवं वद्विमत्या अगच्छतं युवं सुषुतिं चक्रथुः पुरंधये ॥ *Rv.* X-39-7

60. हत्वा छित्वा च भित्वा च क्रोशन्तीं रुदन्तीं गृहात् ।

प्रसह्य कन्यां हरतो राक्षसो विधिरुच्यते ॥ *Manusmṛti*, III-33

61. राक्षसं क्षत्रियस्यैकं । *Manusmṛti*, III-24

62. क्षत्रियाणां तु वीर्येण प्रशस्तं हरणं बलात् । *Mahābhārata*, I-245-6

63. अभूर्वैक्षीर्व्यु आयुरानडूर्षन्तु पूर्वो अपरो नु दर्षत् ।

द्वे पवस्ते तं न भूतो यो अस्य पारे रजसो विवेष ॥ *Rv.* X-27-7

A respectable girl always selected from among her suitors one whom she really loved, as true love is considered the real basis of conjugal happiness. A *mantra* in the *Atharvaveda*<sup>64</sup> shows that parents usually left the daughter free in selection of her lover and directly encouraged her in being forward in love-affairs.

According to Manu "where the bride and the bridegroom meet each other of their own accord and the meeting is consummated in copulation born of passion, that form is called *Gandharva*."<sup>65</sup> In the *Mahābhārata*, sage Kaṇva the foster-father of Śakuntalā, says "the marriage of a desiring woman with a desiring man, though without religious ceremonies, is the best marriage."<sup>66</sup>

### The Marriage Ceremonies :

According to the *Sarvānukramaṇī*, the eighty-fifth hymn in the tenth *maṇḍala* of the *R̥gveda*, is considered as a marriage hymn. Here, the whole sense is made as the basis of a metaphoric description in which the heavens take part. However, imaginary the plot may be, it can be safely concluded that the seers largely drew upon the knowledge of the rites, they had from the practical life. The marriage hymn describes the marriage of Sūryā (the daughter of Sūrya), with the Soma.

The marriage customs were almost the same in the *R̥gvedic* and *Atharvavedic* periods. But, the *Atharvavedic* marriage hymns disclose a few changes in the arrangement of the proceedings. Indeed the marriage hymn of the *R̥gveda* (X-85) is taken bodily in the

64. आ नो अग्ने सुमतिं संभलो गमेदिमां कुमारीं सह नो भगेन ।

जुष्टा वरेषु समनेषु वल्लुरेषां पत्या सौभगमस्वस्यै ॥ *Av.* II-36

65. इच्छायाऽन्योन्य संयोगः कन्यायाश्च वरस्य च ।

गन्धर्वः स तु विज्ञेयो मैथुन्यः कामसम्भवः ॥ *Manusmṛti*, III-32

66. सकामायाः सकामेन निर्मन्त्रः श्रेष्ठ उच्यते । *Mahābhārata*, IV-94-60



*Atharvaveda*, but with important changes, and it covers the whole *Kaṇḍa XIV* of the *Atharvaveda*.

During the *Sūtra* period, every *Gṛhyasutra* describes the marriage ceremonies in a set order. The *Gṛhyasutras*, however, differ slightly in the arrangement of their matters and contain a few varying details. Because, every Vedic family had its own *Sūtras*, containing local and tribal differences. But there was no material difference, the religious and the social backgrounds being the same. The *Sūtrakaras* have quoted almost the same Vedic *mantras* and follow the same marriage customs. The marriage ceremonies have developed in the Vedic period, and a few new features are found in the *Gṛhyasutras*.

#### **The Antyeṣṭi Saṁskāra :**

The last sacrament in the life of a Hindu is the *Antyeṣṭi* or the funeral with which he closes the concluding chapter of his worldly career. This *Saṁskāra*, being post-mortem, is not less important, because for a Hindu the value of the next world is higher than that of the present one. The *Baudhāyana Pitrmedha Sūtra* says, "It is well known that through the *Saṁskāras* after the birth one conquers this earth while through the *Saṁskāras* after the death the heaven."<sup>67</sup> Therefore, the ritualists are very anxious to have the funerals performed with meticulous care.

The earliest literary text that makes a mention of funeral ceremonies is found in the *Rgveda Saṁhitā*. The details of the rites may appear like those of the marriage rites, to have differed among different tribes during the time of the *Vedas*. Moreover, the *mantras* of the ceremonies are not arranged in the order of their occurrence

67. जातसंस्कारेणमं लोकमभिजयति मृतसंस्कारेणामुं लोकम्।

*Baudhāyana Pitrmedha Sūtra*, III - 1 - 4.

in the *Rgveda*. The fourteen to nineteenth hymns in the tenth *mandals* of the *Rgveda*, are connected with funeral rites. They imply the main incidents of the funeral rite :

- 1) The widow lay down on the funeral pile by the side of her husband.<sup>68</sup>
- 2) The various parts of the dead man's body were directed to go to appropriate places.<sup>69</sup>
- 3) The bones were collected and buried and in some cases a funeral monument was erected.<sup>70</sup>
- 4) A farewell address was presented to the dead.<sup>71</sup>
- 5) Then there was feasting and resumption of dancing and laughter.<sup>72</sup>

Thus the above list shows all the four parts of the complete funeral rite, the burning; the *Abhiṣiñchana* and the *Śmaśāna-chiti* (the washing of the corpse and piling of the funeral pyre); the

68. इमा नारीरविधवाः सुपत्नीराज्जनेन सर्पिषा सं विषन्तु ।

अनश्रवोऽनमीवाः सुरत्ना आ रोहन्तु जनयो योनिमग्रे । *Rv.* X - 18 - 7.

69. सूर्यं चक्षुर्गच्छतु वातमात्मा ध्यां च गच्छ पृथिवीं च धर्मणा ।।

अपो वा गच्छ यदि तत्र ते हितमोषधीषु प्रति तिष्ठा शरीरैः ।। *Rv.* X - 16 - 3.

70. उच्छ्वज्ज्वस्व पृथिवी मा नि बाधथाः सुपायनास्मै भव सूपवज्ज्वना ।

माता पुत्रं यथा सिचाभ्येनं भूम ऊर्णुहि ।। *Rv.* X - 18 - 11.

उत्ते स्तन्भामि पृथिवीं त्वत्परीमं लोगं निदधन्मो अहं रिषम् ।

एतां स्थूणां पितरो धारयन्तु तेऽत्रा यमः सादना ते मिनोतु ।। *Rv.* X - 18 - 13.

71. *Rv.* X - 14 - 7, 8.

प्रेहि प्रेहि पथिभिः पूर्वोभियत्रा नः पूर्वे पितरः परेयुः ।

उभा राजना स्वधया मदन्ता यमं पश्यासि वरूणं च देवम् ।।

सं गच्छस्व पितृभिः सं यमेनेष्टापूतेन परमे व्योमन् ।

हित्वायावद्यं पुनरस्तमेहि सं गच्छस्व तन्वासुवर्चाः ।।

72. इमे जीवा वि मृतैरावृत्रं न भूद्भद्रा देवहूतिर्नो अघ ।

प्राज्वो अगाम नृतये हसाय द्राधीय आयुः प्रतरं दधानाः ।। *Rv.* X - 18 - 3.

*Udaka-karma* (water oblations); and the *Śāntikarma* (pacificatory rites).

### **Different kinds of Disposal :**

Inhumation or burial proper is almost absent in the present day Hindu funerals, except in cases of great saintly personalities and very small children. But the existence of this custom among common people in the Ṛgvedic times is suggested in the few *mantras*. Addressing the dead body carried to and laying in the burial ground, the priest says following Ṛgvedic *mantras* :<sup>73</sup>

“Go to this your mother-earth, the wide-spread, delightful, this virgin earth is as soft as wool, to the liberal worshipper; may she protect you from the proximity of Nirṛti.

Earth, rise up above him; oppress him not; he attentive to him and comfortable; over him up earth, as a mother covers her child with the skirt of her garment. May the earth heaped over him lie light; may thousands of particles of dust envelop him; may these mansions distil ghee for him; may they every day be an asylum to him in this world.

I heap up the earth around you, placing upon you this clod of earth; may I not be injured; may the Pitṛs sustain this your monument; may Yama make you a dwelling here”

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73. उप सर्प मातरं भूमिमेतामुरुव्यचसं पृथिवीं सुशोवां ।

ऊर्णमृदा युवतीर्दक्षिणावत एषा त्वा पातु निऋतेरूपसथात् ॥ *Rv.* X - 18-10.

*Rv.* X - 18 - 11, 12, 13.

उच्छ्वज्वमाना पृथिवी सु तिष्ठतु सहस्रं मित उप हि श्रयन्ताम् ।

ते गृहासो घृतश्चुतो भवन्तु विश्वाहास्यै शरणाः सन्त्वत्र ॥

उत्ते स्तभ्नामि पृथिवीं त्वत्परीमं लोगं निदधन्मो अहं रिषम् ।

एतां स्तूणां पितरो धारयन्तु तेऽत्र यमः सादना ते मिनोतु ॥

Scholars influenced by the later-day custom of cremation and the subsequent burial of the remains, hold that the hymns above refer to the *Asti-sañcaya* or the collection of bones. According to Sāyaṇa the above *mantras* were uttered at the time when the bones of the dead were put into an urn and buried into a grave. He basis shows the for his opinion on the *Āśvalāyana Gr̥hyasūtra*. But this was a later custom, and should be regarded as a relic of the ancient custom of burial, which was being replaced by the custom of cremation.

In this manner, the Ṛgveda remains of historical fact that cremation or burning of the dead body is the most recognised mode of the disposal of corps among the Hindus from the time of the Vedas up to the present day. This mode evolved at a high stage of human civilization, as it is the most scientific and refined.

The custom of cremation a lasting position was the religious belief of the Indo-Aryans that obtained during the Ṛgvedic period. Agni was regarded by the Ṛgvedic Aryans as the messenger of the gods on earth, and he carries of the oblation offered to them.<sup>74</sup> The material things that constituted *Havya* could not be bodily and directly conveyed to the gods in heaven; hence the services of a heavenly messenger and carrier like Agni were requisitions. This analogy was also extended to human corpses as well as to the carcasses of the animals that were sacrificed to the gods. After a man died, it was necessary to send his body to heaven. This could be only done by consigning it to Agni. After the body was consumed by it and reduced to ashes, the dead could receive a new body in the world of Yama and join the *Pitaras* and his ancestors.<sup>75</sup> This

74. वह्निं यशसं विदथस्य केतुं सुप्राव्यं दूतं सद्यो अर्थम्। *Rv.* I - 60 - 1.

75. *Rv.* X - 14 - 8.

seems to be the most powerful idea underlaying the custom of cremation, and the idea was essential as religious one.

### **The Rgvedic Caste System :**

*Jāti* (caste) is one of the most discussed and the most misunderstood and misrepresented social institution of India. There is a real difficulty in the study and discussion of *Jāti*. It is a peculiarly popular institution in the sense that its features evolved, as in case of other social institutions gradually to suit the needs of various groups in society. The various professional groups-carpenters, weavers, artisans, traders, potters, cultivators etc. are mentioned in the *Rgveda*. These groups lived in different parts of the villages and sometimes in separate villages. Thus a common professional and a common residential area seem to have united these families into a single community which gradually acquired its own peculiar custom, mode of behavior, form of worship, rules regarding food and marriage etc. in short, features that could distinguish it from other similar communities. In addition to the fact of living together in a well-defined area, two other factors encouraged the formation of these communities. Firstly, each profession was a family profession in the sense that it was carried on in the home itself, thereby enabling all members of the family to take an active interest in it. Secondly, the profession was heredity. Thus the families following a particular profession for generations, living together in a more or less well-defined area, worshipping a particular god and acquiring their own social and cultural traditions formed a community and when its distinguishing feature came to be birth (*janma*) it acquired the name, *Jāti*. Any individual born in such a community was normally expected and also inclined to follow the profession of his *Jāti*, observe

its rules and regulations regarding regions food, and marriage and thus would himself and the society through his *Jāti*.<sup>76</sup>

The caste-system contributed a good deal to the prosperity of the people and to the progress and continuity of Indian culture as well. Poets, saints, the teachers and social reformers have emphasized and preached from time to time, the unity and universality of life, the essential unity of all beings, the ideal of universal love and brotherhood, the ideas of sacrifice and service and the duties of every one towards family, society and to God, the father of all creation, to whom everything is to be dedicated. The *Rgveda* declares :

"They are brothers, of whom no one is the elder, no one the younger, but who grew up together for their mutual prosperity; may their father, Rudra, ever youthful, the doer of good deeds, and Pṛṣṇi their mother, easy to be milked, grant favourable days for the sake of the Maruts."<sup>77</sup>

The concept of the all-protecting father was adopted, from the *Rgveda* onwards, in religion, society, politics, education and economic life. The ruler, the teacher, the employer indeed every elderly person is to be regarded as father. There, is thus no room for jealousy or discord in this society based on affection.

The root of the *Varṇa* system is to be found in the ardent desire of the ancient seers to give a meaning and social significance to the functions of each occupational group. For the purpose of the convenience of defining and prescribing the code of conduct, the

76. Cidambra Kulkarni, *Vedic Foundations of Indian Culture*, P. 94.

77. अजयेष्टासो अकनिष्ठासे एते सं भ्रातरो वावृधुः सौभगाय ।

युवा पिता स्वपा रूद्र एषां सुदुग्धा पृश्निः सुदिना मरूद्भः ॥ *Rv.* V . 60 - 5

numerous *Jātis* came to be grouped into four *Varṇas* - Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras, on the basis of the nature of their functions. The *Varṇa* system found its full expression in the *Dharma Sūtras* of the Vedic period and it is explained in authoritative and clear terms in the *Smṛtis*. But the references in the *R̥gveda* and other Vedic literature clearly indicate the existence of this system even in the earliest period. In the *R̥gveda*, the famous *Puruṣa- sūkta* (X-90)<sup>78</sup> is usually considered to be the source of the *Varṇa* theory, But it does not say that these were four *Varṇas*.

The word *Varṇa* is originally meant colour and then caste. The *R̥gveda* very clearly shows that the caste distinction originated in colour distinction. The R̥gvedic Aryans were a homogeneous people conscious of the unity of their race, religion and culture. The Aryas were white in complexion and their consciousness of it is shown by the use of the word *Śvitnya*<sup>79</sup> (white complexioned) in describing themselves. Many of their families such as the Vasiṣṭhas and the Tṛtsus are similarly called *Śvitynca*.<sup>80</sup> On the other hand, the Dāsas or non-Aryans are often called black (*Kṛṣṇayoni*)<sup>81</sup> or black-skinned (*Kṛṣṇatvac*).<sup>82</sup> The Āryas made every effort to make their colony of

78. ब्राह्मणो अस्य मुखमासीत् बाहू राजन्यः कृतः।

उरू तदस्य यद्वैश्यः पद्भ्यां शूद्रो अजायत ।। *Rv.* X - 90- 12

Sāyaṇa on this *mantra* : "ब्राह्मणत्वः पुरुषः मुखमासीत् सुखद् उत्पन्नः इत्यर्थः। योऽयं राजन्यः क्षात्रियत्वजातिमान् पुरुषः सः बाहूकृतः बाह्वेन निष्पादितः। बाहुभ्यामुत्पादित इत्यर्थः। तत् इदानीम् अस्य प्रजापतेः यत् यौ उरू तद्वैश्यः सम्पन्नः। उरूभ्यामुत्पन्नः इत्यर्थः तथास्य पद्भ्यां पादाभ्यां शूद्रः शूद्रत्व जातिमान् पुरुषः अजायत ।"

79. सनत्क्षेत्रं सखिभिः श्वित्येभिः सनत्सूर्यं सनदपः सुवज्रः। *Rv.* I - 100 - 18.

80. श्वित्यज्वो मा दक्षिणतस्कपर्दा धियंजिन्वासो अभिः प्रमन्दुः। *Rv.* VII - 33 - 1 ; VII - 83 - 8.

81. स वृत्रहेन्द्रः कृष्णयोनीः पुरंदरो दासीरैरद्वि। *Rv.* II - 20 - 7.

82. मनवे शासद्व्रतान्वचं कृष्णामरन्धयत्। *Rv.* I - 130 - 8.

*Saptasindhu* a purely Aryan territory by driving the Dāsas out of it, and they were successful to a great extent, but when they spread further eastward they found it impossible to get rid of the Dāsas. They, therefore, became more friendly to them and the Āryas and Dāsas became the two sections of the Indian society. Here the caste system had its first origin.

The Ṛgvedic society began to comprise two *Varṇas*. The white Aryan people came to constitute the *Ārya Varṇa*,<sup>83</sup> and the dark Dāsas similarly constitute the *Dāsa Varṇa*.<sup>84</sup> The *Ṛgveda* not only mentions the terms *Ārya-Varṇa* and *Dāsa-Varṇa*, but at one place actually speaks of the great Aryan seer Agastya as protecting 'both the *Varṇas*.'<sup>85</sup> This leaves no room for doubt that in the *Ṛgvedic* period there were only two *Varṇas* in the Indian society, the Ārya and Dāsas. In this connection P. L. Bhargava says-

"The non-Aryan Dāsas, when admitted into Aryan colonies, began to serve the Āryas and the word *Dāsa*, therefore, acquired the meaning of servant or slave, just as 'slave' in the teutonic language was originally slave. Probably as a result of this meaning being given to the word, the non-Aryans gave up this name and began to be called Śūdras. Except for this change in the nomenclature of the Dāsas, the condition of the Indian society in the later Vedic period was not much different from that at the end of the Ṛgvedic period. In the later Vedic literature we here of Āryas and Śūdras as still forming the two sections of the Indian society."<sup>86</sup>

83. हत्वी दस्यून्नायं वर्णमावत् । Ṛv. III - 34 - 9.

84. यो दासं वर्णमधरं गुहाकः । Ṛv. II - 12 - 4.

85. अगस्त्यः खनमानः खनित्रैः प्रजामपत्यं बलमिच्छमानः ।

उभौ वर्णा वृषिरुग्रः पुपोष सत्या देवेष्वाशिषो जगाम ।। Ṛv. I - 179 - 6.

86. P.L. Bhārgava, *India in the Vedic age*. p.281.



So far as the Aryan society of the Vedic age is concerned, there is absolutely no trace of anything even approaching caste system. The common *Āryas* were called *Viś*, which simply meant people.<sup>87</sup> This meaning survived even in classical Sanskrit in the word *Viśampati*, lord of the people. This *Viś* included men of all professions or ranks except the nobility and priesthood. The most influential *grāmaṇi*<sup>88</sup> (village head) and the humblest peasant, the soldier, as well as the cowherd, the carpenter and the smith, the tanner and the weaver were all *Viś*.

These people were divided into classes, but not castes and each class was named after the work it had to perform. The *Puruṣa - Sūkta*, emphasises that social harmony is only an aspect of the cosmic harmony. It presupposes that the existence of the four *Varṇas*, as references in the other *Sūktas* also show. Here, two relevant *mantras* are below:<sup>89</sup>

“Indra, would you make me a protector of people or would you make me a king ? would you make a sage that has drunk, Soma would you impart to me endless wealth ?”

“O *Aśvins*, you urge on *Brahma*, you urge on our thoughts, you kill the evil-spirits and subdue disease;”

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87. यच्छिद्वि ते विशे यथा प्रदेव वरुण व्रतम्। *Rv.* I - 25 - 1.

88. सहस्रदा ग्रामणीर्मा स्विमनुः। *Rv.* X - 62 - 11.

89. इन्द्रो हर्यन्तमर्जुनं वज्रं शुक्रैरर्भिवृतम्।

अपावृणोद्धरिभिरद्विभिः सुतमुद्रा हरिभिरजायत।। *Rv.* III - 44 - 5.

ब्रह्म दिन्वतमुत जिन्वतं धियो हतं रक्षांसि सोधतमर्वावाः। *Rv.* VIII - 35 - 16.

क्षत्रं दिन्वतमुत जिन्वतं नृहंत रक्षांसि सोधतमवीवाः। *Rv.* VIII - 35 - 17.

धेनुर्जिन्वतमुत जिन्वतं विशो हतं रक्षांसि सेधतमीवाः। *Rv.* VIII - 35-18.

“You urge on *Kṣatra* and also on men, you kill the evil spirits and subdue disease;”

“You urge on the cows also on the *viś*, you kill evil spirits and subdue disease.”

Here, clear reference to the class of thinkers and poets, to the class of the brave leaders and to the class of the people producing wealth. But these groups are not castes. They do not indicate their origin to be in birth. They do not indicate their origin to be in birth. They mention only the functions. The prayer cited above suggests the possibility of any one becoming a seer, or a ruler or a wealthy person.

Above the common *Ārya* people two privileged order. The most privileged class comprised the *Brāhmaṇas* or priests. The term *Brāhmaṇa*, found in many hymns of the *Ṛgveda*<sup>90</sup> is probably derived from ‘*Brahma*’ meaning a prayer. All those connect with *Brahma* in one way; the other, hymns composition, recitation, meditation, teaching, sacrificing and pressing Soma-plant, formed the *Brāhmaṇa Varṇa*. They were *Brāhmaṇas* by that function, not by birth. Terms like, *Vipra*, *Kavi*, *Ṛṣi*, etc. that are used for *Brāhmaṇas* also emphasise their functions.

In the *Ṛgvedic* period, class of *Brāhmaṇa* was open to every *Ārya* to enter the priestly order. The younger brothers of kings often entered the priestly order, and sometimes even a king would renounce his kingdom and become a *Ṛṣi*. The most noted example of a king who renounced his kingdom to enter the spiritual order is

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90. *Ṛv.* I - 164 - 45 ; VI - 75-10; VII - 103-1; X-16-6. etc.

of course Viśvāmitra.<sup>91</sup> Of the younger sons kings becoming Brāhmaṇas and founding priestly groups. For example, Devāpi, the brother of king Śantanu became a Brāhmaṇa and was admitted into the Ārṣṭiṣeṇa family of the Bhārgavas.<sup>92</sup> The descendants of the great seer Bṛagu were master-carpenters, having been experts in making chariots.<sup>93</sup> Even a lady seer like Mudgalā did not hesitate to take up his arms in pursuit of robbers who had stolen cows, and she drive the chariot for her husband and came to his rescue when the situation had become some-what embarrassing for him.<sup>94</sup> The seers prayed to the Gods for birth of brave and heroic sons who would be able to defeat their enemies in the battle.<sup>95</sup>

In early Ṛgvedic period, the Brāhmaṇas commanded the respect of all classes. The supremacy of the Brāhmaṇas over the other classes was gradually acquired by mental, moral and spiritual culture. Whoever attained to a high degree of spiritual culture could become as seer or *Brāhmaṇa* in ancient times.

The word *Kṣatriya* is found in the *Ṛgveda*.<sup>96</sup> It is exclusively connected with royal authority or divine authority. According to Macdonell and Keith,<sup>97</sup> it included the royal house and the various branches of the royal family. It also included the nobles and their families. *Kṣatra* means valour and *Kṣatriya* was one of the epithets of gods. The great gods Mitra and Varuṇa are called *Kṣatriyas*, or rulers.<sup>98</sup> During the Ṛgvedic age, the class of *Kṣatriyas* was also

91. महौ ऋषिर्देवजा देवजूतोऽसतभ्रत्सिन्धुमर्णवं नृचक्षाः।

विश्वामित्रो यदवहत्सुदासमप्रियायत कुशिकेभिरिन्द्रः॥ *Rv.* III - 53 - 9.

92. *Rv.* X - 98.

93. एतं वां स्तोममश्विनावकर्मातक्षाम भृगवो न रथम्। *Rv.* X - 39 - 14.

94. रथीरभून्मुद्गलानी गविष्टै भरे कृतं व्यचेदिन्द्रसेना। *Rv.* X - 102 - 2.

95. वि तोक अप्सु तनये च सूरैर्वाचन्त चर्षणयो विवाचः। *Rv.* VI - 31 - 1.

96. *Rv.* IV - 12 - 3 ; 42 - 1 ; V - 69 - 1 ; VII - 64 - 2 ; etc.

97. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol I. p - 203.

98. धृतव्रता क्षत्रिया क्षत्रमाश्रतुः॥ *Rv.* VIII - 25-8.

formed but it had not yet become a caste. In the case of *Kṣatriyas* too, their functions were more important than birth. *Rājanya* and *Kṣatriya* are identical. In the *Rgveda* there are much instances of *Kṣatriyas* fighting.

The term *Vaiśya* occur only once in the *Rgveda*.<sup>99</sup> The term *Viś* meaning the group of people is used many times in the *Rgveda*.<sup>100</sup> From the contexts it clearly denotes the common people engaged in agriculture, cattle-breeding, crafts, trade and commers. The main fanction of the *Vaiśya Varṇa* has been to look after the sustenance of other *Varṇas*.

Śūdra is mentioned only once in the *Puruṣa-sūkta*<sup>101</sup> of the *Rgveda*. Scholars think that Śūdra is only another term for *dasyu* and *dāsa* indicating the class of people who did not perform Vedic rituals.<sup>102</sup> But there is evidence to believe that the Śūdras formed a part of vedic society. The *Taittirīya saṁhitā*<sup>103</sup> contain the following prayer :

“Bestow light unto our Brāhmaṇas ; bestow light unto our kings; bestow light unto our Vaiśyas; bestow light unto our Śūdras; bestow light unto me by your light (racam).”

This is clear indication of the Śūdras having been a part of the later *Varṇa* system. However, the *Brāhmaṇa* texts use the term in two senses one meaning a class of Śūdras and the others indicating a sinner. For example, the *Brāhmaṇa* father of the Śunaśśepa, who

99. ऊरू तदस्य यद्वैश्यः। *Rv.* X - 90-12.

100. *Rv.* IV - 4-3 ; 37-1 ; V-3-5 ; VI - 21- 4 ; etc.

101. पद्भ्यां शूद्रो अजायत। *Rv.* X - 90-12.

102. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol II. P - 388.

103. *Taittirīya saṁhitā*, V - 7- 6- 3,4.

sold his son and agreed to sacrifice him for money is condemned as a *Śūdra*.<sup>104</sup> All 'untruth' is *Śūdra*. As such, *Śūdra* is condemned in the strongest terms. Some scholars who did not care to remember these two different uses of the term *Śūdra*, have misunderstood the meaning of the statement of the *Brāhmaṇas* and misrepresented the whole *Varṇa* system.

Thus clearly shows that Aryan society of the Vedic age had no caste system but was divided into three classes of the priests, rulers, and commoners. With the passing of the time, however this classification became more and more rigid.

#### Education in the Rgveda :

As per the Vedic lores, education in ancient time, was being given to a student after he was initiated with *Upanayana Samśkāra*. In the *Rgveda*, there is no explicit reference to the ceremony of *Upanayana* (intiation). It is regarded as of such great importance in the later-vedic times. The word *Brahmacārin* occurs in the *Rgveda*, in the sense of a religious student.<sup>105</sup> Macdonell and Keith observe that "the practice of studentship doubtless developed, and was more strictly regulated by custom as time went on, but it is regularly assumed and discussed in the later Vedic literature, being obviously a necessary part of Vedic society."<sup>106</sup> In the later Vedic period, however, *Upanayana* ceremony had come into existence and the *Brahmacārins* used to live with his teacher after the ceremony, gathering sacred fuel for fire-worship and bringing alms to the

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104. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, VII.13

ऋतावाना नि षेदतुः साआम्राज्याय सुकृतू।

105. ब्रह्मचारी चरति वेविषद्विषः स देवानां भवत्येतमङ्गम्। *Rv.* X - 109 - 5.

106. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol. II. p-75.

teacher.<sup>107</sup> In this connection it is to be noted - "The *Atharvaveda* has in honour of the *Brahmacārin* hymn (XI-5) which already gives all the characteristic features of religious studentship. The youth is initiated (*upa-nī*) by the teacher into a new life; he wears an antelope skin, and lets his hair grow long; he collects fuel, and begs, learns and practises penance. All these characteristics appear in the later literature. The student lives in the house of his teacher (*ācārya-kula-vāsin*, *ante-vāsin*); he begs, looks after the sacrificial fires and tends the house. His term of studentship might be long extended; it was normally fixed at twelve years, but much longer periods, such a thirty-two years, are mentioned. The age at which studentship began varied... one of the duties of the *Brahmacārin* was chastity."<sup>108</sup>

In the *R̥gveda*, several terms are used for education viz. *Śikṣate*, *Śikṣti*, *Śikṣasi*, *Śikṣat*, *Śikṣa*, *Śikṣamāṇa*, *Śikṣanara* etc. The Frog-hymn *Manḍūkā-sūkta* (VII-103) gives a glimpse of the educational system of the *R̥gvedic* age. The fifth *mantra* of this hymn, gives a picture of the earliest Vedic schools. It compares the croaking of the frogs to the chorus of voices heard, when a teacher recites the *mantra*, section by section (*parvan*), and the pupils repeat his words after him.<sup>109</sup> The first *mantra* of the hymn suggests through a simile that this concerted school-recitation sprang into life suddenly, at a stated time (the opening of the monsoon!), because frogs raising their (rain-inspired voices at the opening of the monsoon after laying low for (the rest of) the year, are compared to Brāhmaṇas, conforming

107. *Atharvaveda*, XI - 5.

108. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol II. pp - 75-76.

109. यदेषामन्यो अन्यस्य वाचं शाक्तस्येव वदति शिक्षमाणः।

सर्वं तदेषां समृधेव पर्व यत्सुवाचो वदथनाध्यप्सु ।। *R̥v.* VII - 103 - 5.

to their fixed annual routine (*Vrata*).<sup>110</sup> This clearly means that there were schools already in existence to which a number of students flocked. Evidently the instruction was orally imparted.

The first stage in the teaching was recitation. The teacher would recite *mantras* piece by piece and students would repeat them in the same manner. This was necessary to ensure clear and accurate pronunciation, training of memory and concentration. The next stage was self-study (*svādhyāya*) which includes both study and teaching as well as performance of religious rites.

This is almost the final stage in the education. The oral method of instruction was indeed a direct method employing the question-answers, stories, parables, illustrations easy experiments and such other devices by which the student could be trained to think on right lines. In fact, the system demanded much to be done by the student. The teacher therefore, had to take into consideration the students intellectual capacity, physical ability as well as his willingness, aptitude and interest and accordingly instruct him in the suitable branch of learning. The *Rgveda* points out :<sup>111</sup>

“Friends possessing eyes, possessing ears, were (yet) unequal to mental apprehension; some seemed like pools reaching to the mouth, others reaching to the loins, others like pools in which one can bathe.”

Sāyaṇa comments on this *mantra* stating that there were three types of students- the *Mahārprajñā*, the *madhyama prajñā* and the

110. संवत्सरं शशयाना ब्राह्मणा व्रतचारिणः।

वाचं पर्जन्यजिन्वितां प्र मण्डूका अवादिशु ॥ *Rv.* VII - 103 - 1

111. अक्षण्वन्तः कर्णवन्तः सखायो मनोजवेष्वसमा बभूवुः।

आदध्नास उपकक्षास उ त्वे हृदा इव स्नात्वा उ त्वे दद्रे । *Rv.* X - 71 - 7.

*alpaprajñā*.<sup>112</sup> The oral system thus had the peculiar advantage of indicating whether student has really learnt what was taught by the teacher.

Among the subject of study, the Vedic hymns must have occupied the most important place. Another important subject must have been metre. These subjects, who had intended to take up priestly profession must have been required to master the details of rituals associated with the hymns they had memorised. Elementary arithmetic must have been another subject. The elements of geometry necessary to construct the altars of the various sacrifices must have been expounded. The knowledge of elementary astronomy which enabled the Ṛgvedic people to find out the differences between the lunar and solar years was probably imparted to all. The *Ṛgveda* not only mentions the twelve months of the year but also the intercalary months.<sup>113</sup> The heroic lore, which developed into *Itihāsa*, *Purāṇa*, and *Nārāśaṁsīs*, *Gāthās*, must have been another subject of study.<sup>114</sup> The knowledge of rivers, mountains and other physical features of Ṛgvedic territory shown by the *Ṛṣis* of the *Ṛgveda* proves that some knowledge of the geography of the motherland was also imparted to students. In the later Vedic period grammar, etymology, phonetics must have been added to the above subjects.<sup>115</sup>

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112. *Sāyana*, X - 71 - 7.

113. वेद मासो धृतव्रतो द्वादश प्रजावतः। वेदा य अजायते। *Rv.* I - 25 - 8.

114. *Atharvaveda*, XV - 6 - 11.

The *Ṛgveda* mentions, *Raibya*, the *Nārāśaṁsīs*, and the *Gāthās*

*Rv.* रैव्यासीदनुदेयी नारासंसी न्योचनी।

सूर्याय भद्रमिद्वासो गाथमौति परिष्कृतम्।। *Rv.* x-85-6

115. शिक्षा व्याकरणं छन्दः निरुक्तं ज्योतिषं तथा।

कल्पश्चति षडङ्गानि .....।



### Position of Women :

The position of women in the society of the Ṛgvedic age was fairly high. In every sphere of life, they were considered on par with men. The religious or ritual activities had to be completed only in their presence.<sup>1</sup> In this connection the *Ṛgveda* narrates a story of Bṛhaspati, who leaving his wife because of her impertinence, went away for practicing penances.<sup>2</sup> But, the God explained to him that it was improper to perform penance without wife. The wife is described in the *Ṛgveda*, as 'the ornament of home',<sup>3</sup> and a step ahead, the seer Viśvāmitra establishes identity between the wife and home.<sup>4</sup> The *Vivāhasūkta* (X-85) of the *Ṛgveda* describes that the young wife has been enjoined to exercise authority over her husband's father, mother, sisters and brothers. She was likely to be called upon to preside over the household.<sup>5</sup>

During the Ṛgvedic period, women were given sufficient education. They used to participate in philosophical debates like men, which is clear from the *Samvāda-Sūktas* of the *Ṛgveda*. Like Agastya-Lopāmudrā, Viśvāmitra-Śakti etc. They were also practiced penance. The women seers composed some of the Ṛgvedic *mantras*, or hymns. Such as, Ghoṣā (*Ṛv.* I-117; X-39-40); Lopāmudrā (*Ṛv.* I-179), Mamata (*Ṛv.* VI-10-2), Apāla (*Ṛv.* VIII-91), Sūrya (*Ṛv.* x-85);

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1. या दंपती समनसा सुनुता आ च धावतः। देवासु नित्ययाशिरा।। *Ṛv.* VIII-31-5
  2. देवा एतस्यामवदन्त पूर्वे सत्यऋषयः स्तपसे ये निषेदुः।  
भीमा जाया ब्राह्मणस्योपनीता दुर्धा दधति परमे व्योमन्।। *Ṛv.* X-109-4
  3. दाधार क्षेममेको न रण्वो .....। *Ṛv.* I-66-3
  4. जायेदस्तं मघवन्सेदुः .....। *Ṛv.* III-53-4
  5. साम्राज्ञी श्वशुरे भव साम्राज्ञी श्वश्वरां भव।  
ननान्दरी साम्राज्ञी भव साम्राज्ञी अधि देवृषु। *Ṛv.* X-85-46

Indrāṇi (*Rv.* X-145), Śaci (*Rv.* X-159), Sarparājñi (*Rv.* X-189) and Viśvavārā (*Rv.* V-28). The woman seer Viśvavārā not only composed *mantras*, but even performed the functions of a *Rtvik* (priest) at a sacrifice. Apāla composed a hymn in honour of Indra, and offered to him Soma-juice herself. Through the grace of Indra she got cured of her skin-disease for which she had been abandoned by her husband.<sup>7</sup> Her father's head had become bald, and his corn-fields had lost their productive power. It was through her earnest prayer that Indra pleased to cure him of his baldness, and produce bumper crops in his fields.<sup>8</sup>

Women sometimes used accompany their husbands in the war. Viśpalā, the wife of the king Khela, had lost her leg in a war, and in which place an iron (*āyasth*) one was joined by the grace of the Aśvins.<sup>9</sup> Mudgalāni or Indrasenā, wife of the sage Mudgala helped her husband in the pursuit of robbers who had stolen their cows, drove the chariot for her husband when he was put in a tight corner; further she talking up husband's bow and arrow, she gave them battle, defeated them and recovered the stolen property.<sup>10</sup> All these

6. एति प्राची विश्ववारा नमोभिर्देवाँ ईळाना हविषा घृताची । *Rv.* V-28-1

7. कुविच्छक कुवित्करकुविन्नो वस्यसस्करत् ।  
कुवित्पतिद्विषो यतीरिन्द्रेण संगमामहै । *Rv.* VIII-91-4

8. *Rv.* VII-91-5,6  
इमानि त्रीणी विष्टपा तानिन्द्र वि रोहय ।  
शिरस्ततस्योर्वरामादिदं म उपोदरे ।।  
असौ च या न उर्वरादिमां तन्वं मम ।  
अथो ततस्यचच्छिरः सर्वा ता रोमशा कृधि ।।

9. सद्यो जड्घा मायसीं विष्पलायै धने हिते सतवे प्रत्यदत्तम् । *Rv.* I-116-15

10. *Rv.* X-102-2,9,10,11  
रथीरभून्मुद्गलानी गविष्टौ भरे कृतं व्यचेदिन्द्रसेना ।  
इमं तं पश्य वृषभस्य युज्जं काष्टाया मध्ये दुगणं शयानम् ।  
येन जिगाय शतवत्सहस्रं गवां मुद्गलः पृतनाज्येषु ।।

instances show that women played a very important role in the domestic and social life. They were received not only a high intellectual and spiritual, but also a vigorous physical training equally with the men, they were sometimes surpassed in bravery, intelligence and cleverness.

The girls were given in marriages long after they had reached puberty.<sup>11</sup> They had considerable freedom in choosing of their bridegrooms.<sup>12</sup> The dowry was not generally approved in the R̥gvedic society. Similarly, dowry was given when the girl had some physical defect.<sup>13</sup>

The aim of marriage was to continue the progeny.<sup>14</sup> The marriage was a sacred bond which could not be broken by any human action. The monogamy was the usual rule in the R̥gvedic society.<sup>15</sup> The polygamy was existed but amongst the kings and chiefs.<sup>16</sup> The polyandry not allowed in that period. The widows were allowed to re-marry particularly when they were without a child.<sup>17</sup>

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आरे अघा को चिता ददर्श यं युज्जन्ति तम्वा स्थापयन्ति  
नास्मौ तृणं नोदकमा भ्रन्त्युत्तरो धुरो वहति प्रदेदिषत् ।।  
परिवृक्तेव पतिविद्यमानट् पीप्यान् कूचक्रेणेव सिञ्चन् ।।  
एषैष्या चिद्रथ्या जयेम सुमङ्गलम् सिनवदस्तु सातम् ।।

11. अन्ममिच्छ पितृषदं व्यक्तां स ते भागो जनुषा तस्य विद्धि ।। R̥v. X-85-21
12. कियती योषा मर्यतो वधूयोः परिप्रीता पन्यसा वार्येण ।  
भद्रा वधूर्भवती यत्सुपेक्षसः स्वयं सा मित्रं वनुते जनेचित् ।। R̥v. X-27-12
13. प्र श्मश्रु दोधुवदूर्ध्वथा भूद्वि सेनाभिर्दयमानो वि राधस्य । R̥v. X-23-1
14. यतो वीरा कर्मव्यः सुदक्षो युक्तग्रावा जायते देवकामः । R̥v. III-4-9
15. ते जायेव पत्य उशती सुवासाः । R̥v. IV-3-2  
जनीरिव पतितेकः समानो ..... । R̥v. VII-26-3
16. सं मा तपन्त्यभितः सपत्नीरिव पर्शवः । R̥v. I-105-8
17. को वां शयुत्रा विधवेव देवरं मर्यं न योषा कृणुते सधस्या उप । R̥v. X-40-2

The childless widow inherited her husband's property as matter of right.<sup>18</sup> The unmarried daughter lived with her parents in her parent's house. She is called *amājur*. Sometimes she used to demand and got a share of the ancestral property for her maintenance.<sup>19</sup> But, generally she could not claim any share with her brothers.<sup>20</sup>

The women were not to remain behind four wall of the house, but moved about freely. They were attending feasts and dances, as referred to in fair ladies flocking to festive gathering.<sup>21</sup> From the brief account above, it would be clear that the position of the women in the R̥gvedic society was high and honourable.

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18 .परिवृक्तेव पतिविद्यमानद् पीप्यान कूचक्रेणेव सिञ्चन् ।

एषैष्या चिद्रथ्या जयेम सुमङ्गलं सिनवदस्तु सातम् ।। R̥v. X-102-11

19. अमाजूरिव पित्रोः सचा सतीं समानादा सदस्त्वामीये भगम् ।

कृधि प्रकेतमुप मास्या भर दद्धि भागं तन्वो येन मामहः ।। R̥v. II-17-7

20. न जायेम तान्वो रिक्थमारैक्वकार गर्भं सानितुर्निधानम् ।। R̥v. III-31-2

21. भुरन्तु नो यशसः सोत्वन्धसो ग्रावाणो वाचा दिविता दिविमता ।

नरो यत्र दुहते काम्यं यध्वाघोषयन्तो अभितो मिथस्तुरः ।। R̥v. X-77-6

### Dress and Decorations:

During the Ṛgvedic age, the peoples had learnt the process of manufacturing clothes from sheep's wool. Their garments mainly consisted of woollen clothes, showing that the climate was still very cold and necessitated the use of warm clothing. *Vāsas*<sup>1</sup> is the most usual word for clothes in the *Ṛgveda*. The god Pūṣan is called "a weaver of garments" (*vāso-vāya*).<sup>2</sup> *Ūrṇa* (wool) is very frequently mentioned in the *Ṛgveda*. The bank of the river Paruṣṇī (Rāvi)<sup>3</sup> is famous for wool, as Gandhāra<sup>4</sup> was famous for its sheep. The Sindhu country is called *Suvāsa* (the producers of beautiful cloths) and *Ūrṇāvati* (the producer of wool).<sup>5</sup> The dress consisted of two garments; the *Vāsas* is lower garment and *adhivāsa*<sup>6</sup> is an upper garment. The *adhivāsa* sometimes refers to the *adhivastra*.<sup>7</sup>

Besides these a mantle or cloak called *atka*<sup>8</sup> and *drāpi*<sup>9</sup> are also mentioned. The garments were some times embroidered and the Maruts are described as wearing mantles adorned with gold.<sup>10</sup>

1. वासोवायोऽविनामा वासांसि मर्मजत् ।      *Rv.* X-26-6  
*Rv.* I-34-1 ; 115-4; 162-16; VII-3-24 etc.
2. अधीषमाणायाः पतिः शुचायाश्च शुचस्य च ।  
वासोवायोऽविनामा वासांसिमर्मजत् ।।      *Rv.* X-26-6
3. श्रीये परूष्णीमुषमाण उर्णां यस्याः पर्वाणि सख्याय विव्ये । *Rv.* IV-22-2
4. सर्वाहमस्मी रोमशा गन्धारीणामिवाविका । *Rv.* I-126-7
5. स्वश्वा सिन्धुः सुरथा सुवासा हिरण्ययी सुकृता वाजिनीवती ।  
उर्णावती युवतिः सीलमावत्युताधि वस्ते सुभगा मधुवृधम् ।। *Rv.* X-75-8
6. यदश्वाय वास उपस्तृणन्ति अधीवासं या हिरण्यान्यस्मै । *Rv.* I-163-16  
I-140-9 ; X-5-4
7. यो वां यज्ञेभिरावृतोऽधिवस्त्र वधूरिव ।      *Rv.* VII-26-13
8. उच्छुक्रमत्कमजते सिमस्मान्नवा यातृभ्यो वसना जहाति । *Rv.* I-95-7
9. भिभ्रद्रापिं हिरण्ययं वरुणो वस्त निर्णिजम् । *Rv.* I-25-13
10. यदश्वाधूर्षु पृषतीरयुध्वं हिरण्ययान्प्रत्यत्कां अमुग्वहम् ।  
विश्वा इत्सप्रधो मरुतो व्यस्यथ शुभं यातमनु रथा अवृत्सथ । *Rv.* V-55-6

A kind of embroidered garment *peśas*<sup>11</sup> such as female-dancers would wear. A special garment called *Vādhūya*<sup>12</sup> is weaved for uses of the bride at the marriage ceremony. In the Ṛgvedic age the skin was also used for the garments. The Maruts are described as wearing deer- skins.<sup>13</sup> In a *Vālakhilya* hymn, the seer Kṛśa says that king Praskaṇva, for giving him a “hundred dressed hides”.<sup>14</sup> It is shown that the skins of animals were used for clothing by the primitive inhabitants.

The men and women were found of using ornaments in the Ṛgvedic times. *Niṣka*<sup>15</sup> is a golden ornament worn on the neck, as is shown by the epithet *niṣka-grīva*.<sup>16</sup> *Rukma*<sup>17</sup> is another golden ornament in the shape of a plate, worn on the chest which is widened by the term *Rukma Vakṣas*.<sup>17</sup> The god Maruts are described as decorated with *rukma*<sup>19</sup> which suggests that it is for the males. Pearl ornaments were being used, which however is suggestive of *Kṛśana*.<sup>20</sup> The pearls must have been available in large quantities in the *Sapta-sindhu* region. Because the river Sindhu is called *Hiranya vartinī*.<sup>21</sup> Besides it is mentioned that pearls were used to adorn the chariot of

11. अधि पेशांसि वपते .....। Ṛv. I-92-4
12. सूर्या यो ब्रह्मा विद्यात्स इन्द्राधूयमर्हति Ṛv. X-85-34
13. अंसेब्बेताः पविषु क्षुरा अधि वयो न पक्षान्व्यनु श्रियो धिरे। Ṛv. I-166-10
14. शतं चर्माणि म्लातानि Ṛv. VIII-55-3
15. निष्कं वा घा कृणवते .....। Ṛv. VIII-47-15
16. निष्कग्रीवो बृहदुक्थ एना मध्वा न वाजयुः। Ṛv. V-19-3
17. त्वक्षु रूक्मेषु स्यादिषु। Ṛv. V-53-4  
I-166-10; 4-10-5; VIII-20-11 etc.
18. ब्रह्मद्वयो दधिरे रुक्मवक्षसः। Ṛv. V-55-6  
II-34-8; V-57-5
19. वक्षः सु रुक्मा मरुतो रथे शुभः। Ṛv. V-54-11
20. अभीवृतं कृशनैर्विश्वरूपं। Ṛv. I-35-4
21. Ṛv. VI-61-7

Savitr,<sup>22</sup> the horse fastened to it.<sup>23</sup> The *Srak*<sup>24</sup> is a garland, ordinarily worn by men and made either of flowers or golden lace wrought in to flowers. The makers of the *niṣka* and of the garland are mentioned in the same *mantra*.<sup>25</sup> The *khādi* is either a golden anklet worn both by men and women, or an armlet worn on the arm or wrist like a bangle. It sometimes signifies a ring on the hand (*Khādihasta*).<sup>26</sup> The golden ornaments for the ear were called *Karṇaśobhana*.<sup>27</sup> Besides, the *Rgveda* refers to the epithet *maṇi-grīva*<sup>28</sup> which was worn round the neck. Another *mantra* states that the followers of Vṛatra were adorning the jewels.<sup>29</sup> *Rgveda* also speaks that brides had much liking for ornaments given by their parents.<sup>30</sup>

In the R̥gvedic time, women had their hair well oiled and combed, and dressed in braids (*Kaparda*). They had the practice of weaving braid into four braids which dangled behind on the back.<sup>31</sup> The men also had their long or short, according to their will. The Vasiṣṭas had long hair which was coiled on the right.<sup>32</sup> The *Vaptr*<sup>33</sup> in the *R̥gveda* denotes a barber shaving beards. The *kṣura*<sup>34</sup> is used for razor or blade.

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22. अभीवृतं कृशनैर्विश्वरूपं हिरण्यशाम्यो यजतो बृहन्तम् ।  
अस्थाद्रथं सविता चित्रभानुः कृष्णा रजांसि तविषीं दधानः ।। Rv. I-35-4
23. अभीयस्येव घोषाः । Rv. X-68-1
24. स्रजं क्रण्वानु जन्यो । Rv. IV-38-6
25. निष्कं वा घा कृणवतो स्रजं वा दुहितार्दिवः Rv. VII-47-15
26. त्वेशं गणं तवसं खदिहस्तं । Rv. V-58-2
27. उत नः कर्णशोभना पुरूणि घृण्णवा भर । Rv. VII-78-3
28. हिरण्यकर्णं मणिग्रीवमर्णं स्तन्नो । Rv. I-122-16
29. चक्राणासः परिणहं पृथिव्या हिरण्येन शुम्भमानाः । Rv. I-33-8
30. परिष्कृतसह इन्द्रवहो योषेविह पित्र्यांवती । Rv. IX-46-2
31. चतुष्कपर्दा युवतिः सुपेशा घृतप्रतीका वयुनानि वस्ते । Rv. X-114-2
32. श्विन्यज्जोमा दक्षिणतस्कपर्दा दूरादवितवे वसिष्ठाः ।। Rv. VII-33-1
33. शोचिर्वस्तेव शमश्रु वपसि प्र भूम । Rv. X-142-4
34. क्षुरं रास्व रायो विमोचन । Rv. VII-4-16

### Food and Drinks :

*Yava* is frequently mentioned in the Ṛgvedic *mantras*<sup>1</sup> it was regularly grown in that period and had become their principal food-grain. The words *Dhānya*<sup>2</sup> and *Dhānā*<sup>3</sup> occur in the sense of "grains of corn". The word *vrihi* (rice) does not occur in the *Ṛgveda* but the word *Dhānya* makes up for its absence.<sup>4</sup> These two kinds of grains (*Yava* and *Dhānya*) were the important food grains.

### Preparation of Foods :

In the Ṛgvedic times, the principal food was prepared from barley. The *Karambha*<sup>5</sup> was prepared from parched barley, mixed with curd or ghee. It was offered to Pūṣan.<sup>6</sup> *Apūpa* was a sweetened cake made by barley with fried in the ghee. *Odana*<sup>7</sup> was a name for a mess, usually of grain cooked with milk. This is exemplified by a rigvedic mention of *kṣīrodana*.<sup>8</sup> *Saktu*<sup>9</sup> mentioned as usual malt being preparation, and it was well purified by a sieve. *Pakti*<sup>10</sup> was the name

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1. Ṛv. I-23-15; 135-8; II-5-6; 14-11; V-85-3 etc.
  2. येन तोकाय तनयाय धान्यं बीजं वहद्वे अक्षितम्। Ṛv. V-53-15  
Ṛv. IV-13-4; X-94-16
  3. भोध्यस्मिन्पक्तिः पच्यते सन्ति धानाः। Ṛv. VI-29-4  
I-16-2; III-35-3; 52-5
  4. A.C. Das Rgvedic Culture, P.201
  5. य एनमदिदेशति कर्मभादिति पूषणम्। Ṛv. VI-56-1  
I-187-16; III-57-7; VIII-102-2
  6. अपूपं देव घृतवन्तमग्ने। Ṛv. X-45-9
  7. ओदनं पच्यमानं पुरो गिरा। Ṛv. VIII-69-7
  8. शतं महिषाक्षीरपाकमोदनं वराहमिन्द्रे एवमुषम्। Ṛv. VIII-77-10
  9. सक्तुमिव तितुनाः पुनन्तो यत्र धीरा मनसा वाचमक्रत। Ṛv. X-71-2
  10. आदित्यक्तिः पुरोळाशं रिरिच्यात्। Ṛv. IV-24-7



for a kind of cake. It was used of the *Puroḍāśa*, which was used as a ritual offerings. Cooked food is called *pakva*.<sup>11</sup>

The Ṛgvedic references tell that milk and it's various products were used as food during that period. *Payas* or *Kṣīra*, *Dadhi*, *Ghṛta*, are repeatedly mentioned in the *Ṛgveda*. These three kinds of food are the products of milk given by cows.<sup>12</sup> The *kṣīrodana* was a favourite dish. *Dadhi* stands for sour milk and curd. *Dadhyāśira* is used for it's mixture with the Soma.<sup>13</sup> *Ghṛta* is used in the sacrifice hence Agni is called *Ghṛata-pratīka*,<sup>14</sup> *Ghṛta-prṣṭha*<sup>15</sup> and *Ghṛta-prasatta*.<sup>16</sup>

Fruits of some sorts were obviously known in the *Ṛgveda*. The *Urvāruka*,<sup>17</sup> *Karkandhu*,<sup>18</sup> and the *Pippala*<sup>19</sup> which were found in forests. *Madhu* was also used with food and drinks. It is mentioned frequently in the *Ṛgveda*.<sup>20</sup> Also the flesh (*māṁsa*) was a regular food of the rgvedic peoples. Goats, sheep, and buffaloes were slaughtered for food and at sacrifices and their flesh was being offered

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11. सुमीळ्हे शतं पेरुके च पक्वा । Ṛv. VI-63-9
  12. त्रिधातु गा अधि जयासि । Ṛv. VI-32-5
  13. सोमासो दध्याशिरः । Ṛv. I-55-5  
I-137-2 ; V-51-7
  14. घृतप्रतीकं व ऋतस्य धूर्षमग्निं । Ṛv. I-143-7
  15. शुचिं पावकं घृतप्रष्ठमग्निम् । Ṛv. V-4-3
  16. घृतप्रसक्तो असुरः सुशेवो रायो धर्ता धरुणो वस्वो अग्निः । Ṛv. V-15-1
  17. उर्वारुकमिव बन्धनात्-मृत्योर्मुक्षीय मामृतात् । Ṛv. VII-59-12
  18. याभिः कर्कन्धुं वय्यं च । Ṛv. I-112-6
  19. तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वादु । Ṛv. I-164-20
  20. वनस्पते मधुना दैवेन । Ṛv. III-8-1  
I-19-9 ; 154-4; II-19-2 etc.
  21. अक्षन्नाय वाशान्नाय सोमपृष्टाय वेधसे । स्तोमैर्विदेमग्ने । Ṛv. VIII-43-11

to the gods. "Agni is described as eater of ox and cow" in the *Rgveda*.<sup>21</sup> Bulls were used in the sacrifice for Indra, who was fond of cooked flesh.<sup>22</sup> The *Rgveda* refers to fixed places at which 'slaughtering of bulls' and cows used to take place.<sup>23</sup> Buffaloes were also sacrificed to Indra, and flesh of which cooked was and partaken of by his votaries. The number of these victims sometimes varied from hundred to three hundred. One reference speaks that the roasted and boiled flesh were offered to the gods.<sup>25</sup> The accounts above, show that the rgvedic people had no objection to take beef.

In this connection, A.C. Das thinks - "considering the fact that they had been a pastoral people before they settled down as agriculturists. And that the climate was extremely cold in rgvedic times, as the year was called *Hima* on account of predominance year (*Rv*.I-64.10.etc), one need not be surprised that flesh of animals formed a principal item of their food."<sup>26</sup>

The principal drinks of the Rgvedic people was soma juice the soma plant was grown on the mount Mūjavata<sup>27</sup> (Hindukush) and on the bank of river Gaurī.<sup>28</sup> The leaves of Soma plant were collected and pounded with stones called *grava*<sup>29</sup> or *adri*.<sup>30</sup> Then the women

22. अमा ते मुग्रं वृषभं पचानि । *Rv*. X-27-2

23. यो अक्षेणेव चक्रिया शचीभिर्विश्वक्तस्तम्भ पृथ्वीवीमुतद्याम् *Rv*. X-89-14

24. सखा सख्ये अपचन्त्वयमग्निरस्य कृत्वा महिषा त्री शतानि । *Rv*. V-29-7

V-29-8 ; VI-17-11

25. यन्नीक्षणं मंस्पचन्या उखाया या पात्राणि यूष्ण आसेचतानि *Rv*. I-162-13

मेघं शृतपाकं पचन्तु । *Rv*. I-162-10

26. A.C. Das, *Rgvedic Culture*, p.203

27. सोमस्येव मोजवतस्य । *Rv*. X-34-1

28. सोमो गौरी अधिक्षितः । *Rv*. IX-12-3

29. ग्रावायत्र वदन्ति करुकव्य । *Rv*. I-83-7

30. पिबा सोममिन्द्र सुवानमद्रिभिः *Rv*. I-130-2

used to squeeze the juice out, with their fingers.<sup>31</sup> Afterwords mixed milk, water and strained through a sieve made of sheep's wool. It is placed over a pot (Kalaśa). Thus, strained and purified, the juice was mixed with milk or curd and sometimes honey.<sup>32</sup> It is a favourite drink of the gods as well as of their votaries. In the ninth *maṇḍala* of *R̥gveda* all hymns are in praise of Soma. Soma is described as *Babhru*, *Hari* (tawny)<sup>33</sup> and *aruṇa* (ruddy).<sup>34</sup> In taste, it is *Svādu* (savory), *Madhuman* (sweet), *Tīvra* (Pungent) and *Rasavān* (full of flavor).<sup>35</sup> Śukra or Śuci is a type of soma drink, when it is not mixed with anything.<sup>36</sup>

Another type of drink, sura is also mentioned in the *R̥gveda*. It is an intoxicating drink hence it's drinking is condemned in the *R̥gveda*, as under its influence. Men committed sins and crimes. It has been classed with dicing as an evil. It was usually kept in *dṛti* (skin-vessels).<sup>37</sup> In the *R̥gvedic* period, the *gavāśira*, *dadyāśira* and *yavāśira* were used as drinks, are quite famous.<sup>38</sup> In the post Vedic period the most well known drink offered to honorable guests was *Madhuparka*, which is a combination of curd, water, honey, sugar and ghee.

31. ककुहः सोम्यो रस इन्दुरिन्द्राय पूर्व्यः। *R̥v.* IX-67-8

32. हिन्वन्ति सूरमुत्तयः पवमानं मधुश्चुतं। *R̥v.* IX-67-9

33. एते असृग्रमाशवोऽति ह्वरांसि बभ्रवः। *R̥v.* IX-63-4

34. उत त्वामरुणं वयं गोभिरञ्ज्यो मदया कम्। *R̥v.* IX-45-3

35. स्वादुष्किलायां मधुमाँ उत्तयां तीव्रः किलाया रसवां उतायाम्। *R̥v.* VI-47-1

36. शुक्रा आशिरं याचन्ते। *R̥v.* VIII-2-10

शुचिरसि परुनिष्टः क्षीरिर्मध्यत आशीर्तः *R̥v.* VIII-2-9

37. न स स्वो दक्षो वरुणा घृतिः सा सुरा मन्युर्विभीदको अचित्तिः।

अस्ति जायान्कनीय स उपारे स्वप्नश्चनेदनृततस्य प्रयोता।। *R̥v.* VIII-86-6

38. अश्वमेधस्य दानाः सोमा इव त्र्याशिरः। *R̥v.* V-27-5

## 8. Political and Legal Institutions in the Ṛgvedic Age

### i. Ṛgvedic Polity :

The *Ṛgveda* throw considerable light on the political and legal institutions of that age. The word *Ṛāṣṭra* is mentioned in the *Ṛgveda*.<sup>1</sup> *Ṛāṣṭra* means a kingdom or a state. It is a union of villages and towns. The word *Ṛāṣṭra* which is several times mentioned in the *Ṛgveda*, shows that the region occupied by the Ṛgvedic people was divided into a number of kingdoms (*Ṛāṣṭra*), and each *Ṛāṣṭra* was ruled by a king (*Rājan*).<sup>2</sup> The following Ṛgvedic *mantras* gives an idea of the *Ṛāṣṭra*.<sup>3</sup>

"Where light is perpetual, in the world in which the Sun is placed in that immortal imperishable world place me Pavamāna; flow, Indu, for Indra.

Where Vaivasvata's son is king, where the inner chamber of the Sun is, where these great waters are, there make me immortal; flow, Indu, for Indra."

Thus, the Ṛgvedic seers give a clear idea of the *Ṛāṣṭra*.

The *Yajurveda* clearly mentions the germs of the later *Saptāṅga* theory of the state.<sup>4</sup> The king, the *rāṣṭrabhṛts*, people, cattle, villages, and force are mentioned but only *Durga* (fort) and *Mitra* (allay) are not mentioned. The *Bhūmi-Sūkta* of the *Atharvaveda*<sup>5</sup> gives a very elaborate account of the natural resources.

1. *Rv.* IV-42-1; VII-34-11; 84-2; X-109-3; 124-4, etc

2. *Rv.* III-43-5 ; V-54-7 etc.

3. यत्र ज्योतिरजस्रं यस्मिन्लोके स्वरहितम् ।

तस्मिन्मां धेहि पवमानामृते लोके अक्षित इन्द्रायेन्द्रो परि स्रव ।।

यत्र राजा वैवस्वतो यत्रावरोधनं दिवः ।

यत्रामूर्यह्वतीरापस्तत्र माममृतं कृधीन्द्रायेन्द्रो परि स्रव ।। *Rv.* IX-113-7,8

4. *Yajurveda*, III-4-8

5. *Atharvaveda*, XIII-1-8 to 10

The Vedic thinkers had a correct idea of *Rāṣṭra*, as a political unit is most convincingly conveyed by an interesting reference to it by Yāska in his *Nirukta*. He explains that men individually are many, but as *Rāṣṭra*, they are one. He clearly states that *Rāṣṭra* is created by two factors:<sup>6</sup>

1) *Sastānaikatva* - unity born of residing in the same region

2) *Sambhogaikatva* - the community of interests and enjoyments.

The *Rājan* was the symbol of harmony of all the people and the elements and interesting of the state. The term *Rājan* is repeatedly occurring in the *Rgveda*.<sup>7</sup> He is entrusted with the responsibility of protecting the state and of enhancing its prosperity. The word *Rājan*, used so often in the *Rgveda*, means sometimes a noble and generally a king. The seer Sobhari Kāṇva remarks in a *mantra* of the *Rgveda* as below:

“King Citra who gave thousands and ten thousands (gifts) is the only king, others are only small chiefs along bank of the Sarasvatī.”<sup>8</sup>

The two characteristic features, wealth and liberality specifically mentioned are here to denote the monarch. Further, the king is distinguished from the emperor or universal ruler, by terms *Sāmrajā*,<sup>9</sup> *ekarāja*,<sup>10</sup> *adhirāja*,<sup>11</sup> and the phrase, *Viśvasya bhuvanasya rāja* (the ruler of the wide universe).<sup>12</sup> The meaning of

6. G.T.Deshpande, A Reference to *Rāṣṭra* in *Nirukta*, Nagppur University Journal, No. 16, p-126

7. *Rv.* III-43-5; V-54-7

8. चित्र इद्राजा राजका इदन्यके यके सरस्वतीमनु ।

पर्जन्य इव ततनदि वृष्ट्या सहस्रमयुता ददत् ।। *Rv.* VIII-21-18

9. द्विमाता होता विदथेषु साम्राज्यं चरति क्षेति बुध्नः । *Rv.* III-55-7

10. एकाराजस्य भुवनस्य राजसी शचीपत इन्द्र विश्वरूतिभिः । *Rv.* VII-37-3

11. वसवो रुद्रा आदित्या उपरिस्पृशं मोग्रं चेतारमधिराजमक्रन् ।। *Rv.* X-128-9

12. *Rv.* VII-37-3

these terms is clear in the *Atharvaveda* - "May you shine forth as the sole ruler (*ekarāja*)"<sup>13</sup> and "May he shine as the overlord of kings (*adhirāja*)."<sup>14</sup> In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*,<sup>15</sup> the distinction between a king and an emperor is clearly made; 'By offering the *Rajasūya* he becomes a king and by offering *Vājapeya* he becomes an emperor; the office of the king is lower and that of the emperor is higher'. Besides, '*Sārvabhauma*' and '*Cakravartin*' are the other two terms used for emperor.

The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*<sup>16</sup> mentions, several terms denoting grades of sovereignty such as *Sāmrajya*, *Baujya*, *Svarājya*, *Vairājya*, *Pārameṣṭhya*, *Rājya*, *Mahārājya*, *Adhirājya*, *Ekarāt*, etc. In this passage, the meaning of the terms *Baujya*, *Vairājya*, and *Pārameṣṭhya* is not clear. P.V.Kane<sup>17</sup> suggests that '*Svarājya*' means Supreme-eminence, '*Pārameṣṭhya*' means godlike power. He also points out that '*Svarājya*' in the *R̥gveda* means "an all-embracing sovereignty which will offered protection to many."<sup>18</sup> It is clear from those passages that the ideal of suzerainty extending over many kingdoms was known during the Vedic period.

There is no doubt that the ruler was well-established in the *R̥gvedic* age. He was surrounded by pomp and majesty. He wore a gorgeous robe and lived in the palace with a thousand pillars and thousand portals.<sup>19</sup> He occupied a position of high dignity and

13. *Athrvaveda*, III-4-1

14. Ibid, VI-98-1

15. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, V-I-1-13

16. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, 39-1

17. P.V. Kane : *History of Dharma Śāstra*, Bhandarkar oriental Research Institute, Poona, Vol.III, p.66

18. व्यचिष्टे बहुपाय्ये यतेमहि स्वराज्ये ।। *R̥v.* V-66-6

19. राजानावनभिद्रुहा ध्रुवे समस्युत्तमे । सहस्रस्थूणा आसाते ।। *R̥v.* II-41-5

supremacy which was emphasized by a formal consecration and laudatory hymns.<sup>20</sup> The *Rgveda* leaves no doubt that the king was no longer a leader of a primitive tribe but was the symbol of unity and harmony, as also the gaurdian of a civilized community.<sup>21</sup> The possession of considerable wealth by some of the kings (rulers) is also proved by the fact that according to some of the *Dānastutīs* the presented conferred by kings on their priests were exceedingly bountiful and varied.

The line of kingly succession found in the *Rgveda*, show that kingship was hereditary and the law of primogeniture was normally followed. For example, family line of Divodāsa is as followed:<sup>22</sup> Vadhryaśva>Divodāsa>Paijavana>Sudās.

The protection of the people was the sacred duty of the king and he is emphathatically called the protector of the people (*gopā janasya*).<sup>23</sup> The ruler is invested with divine qualities. In this context, it is necessary to mention that a hymn of the *Rgveda*, attributed to king Trasadasyu, son of Purukutsa is cited as an instance of how kings claimed divine right. But a careful consideration of the hymn shows that it is wrongly interpreted. The hymn reads like this;

“I am Kṣatriya, Ruler of Universe, Ruler of two worlds (earth and heaven), Ruler, Varuṇa, to execute whose purpose the gods

20. आ त्वाहर्षमन्तरेधि ध्रुवस्तिष्ठाविचाचलिः।

विशस्त्वा सर्वा वाञ्छन्तु मा त्वद्राष्ट्रमधि भ्रशत्॥

इहैवैधि माप च्योष्ठाः पर्वत इवाविचाचलिः।

इन्द्रिद्वेह ध्रुवस्तिष्ठेह राष्ट्रमु धारय॥ *Rv.* X-173-1,2

21. पूषा राजानमाधुणिरपगूळ्हं गुहा हितम्। अविन्दच्चित्रबर्हिषम्॥ *Rv.* I-23-14

22. इमं नरो मरुतः सञ्चतानु दिवोदासं न पितरं सुदासः।

अविष्टना पैजवनस्य केतं दूणाशं क्षत्रमजरं दुवोयुः॥ *Rv.* VII-18-25

23. कुविन्मा गोपं रुसे जनस्य कुविद्राजानां मघवनृजीषिन्। *Rv.* III-43-5

acquire necessary powers ! I am limitless in width and depth ! I am possessed of Supreme knowledge ! I am the creator who breathes life into all creatures and sustains the Universe! I am the author of all actions whose power is invincible!"<sup>24</sup>

It is quite clear that such supremacy can be claimed by the Supreme Being alone and not by the author of the hymn. It is a well-known technique of poetry to make the subject of poetry to speak directly. To treat these words as those of Trasadasyu would be manifestly wrong. Therefore, it would be unfair to construct a divine right theory of kings on the basis of such poetic utterances.

The duty of protection involved administration of justice and the Vedic kings administrated justice with the help of *Purohita*. The Vedic *Purohita* was doubtless the forerunner of the *Brāhmaṇa* minister in the later times. He was in all religious matters the *alter-ego* of the king.<sup>25</sup> When the king went to a battle, the *Purohita* took a leading part in his efforts. The seers Vasiṣṭha<sup>26</sup> and Viśvāmitra<sup>27</sup> took the important role in the history of king Sudās war between *Dāśarājña* group. The *Senāni*<sup>28</sup> was the General

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24. *Rv.* IV-42

मम द्विता राष्ट्रं क्षत्रियस्य विश्वायोर्विश्वे अमृता यथा नः।  
 क्रतुं सचन्ते वरुणस्य देवा राजामि कृष्टेरूपमस्य वव्रेः ॥1॥  
 अहं राजा वरुणो महान्तान्यसुर्याणि प्रथमा धारयन्त।  
 क्रतुं सचन्ते वरुणस्य देवा राजामि कृष्टेरूपमस्य वव्रेः ॥2॥  
 अहमिन्द्रे मरुणस्ते महीत्वोर्वि गभीरे रजसी सुमेके।  
 त्वष्टेव विश्वा भुवनानि विद्वान्समैरयं रोदसी धारयं च ॥3॥

25. स संनयः स विनयः पुरोहितः स सुष्टुतः स युधि ब्रह्मणस्पतिः।  
 चाक्ष्मो यद्वाजं भरते मती धनादित्सूर्यस्तपति तप्यतुर्वृथा ॥ *Rv.* II-24-9

26. *Rv.* VII-18; 83

27. *Rv.* III-33; 53

28. प्र सेनानिः शूरो अग्रे रथानां गव्यन्नेति हर्षते अस्य सेना। *Rv.* IX-96-1  
*Rv.* VII-20-5 ; X-84-2 etc.



appointed by the king. The *Grāmaṇī*<sup>29</sup> who was a *Viś* or commoner,<sup>30</sup> was presumably the head of the village, both for civil purposes and for military operations. He was probably the same as the *Vrājapati*<sup>31</sup> mentioned in the *Ṛgveda*, as attended by the *Kulapas* or heads of the families. There are also references to spies (*Spaś*)<sup>32</sup> who were apparently engaged by the king to secure information about the kingdom and the people. The *Ṛgveda* also mentions *dūtas*<sup>33</sup> or messengers who were the principal means of communications between the different states.

The later *Samhitas* and *Brāhmaṇas* mention a large body of royal officials indicating the development of the administrative system in the later Vedic age. They are mentioned in the later Vedic texts, with negligible differences, in the context of the *Rājasūya* sacrifice. They are : 1. The *Rathins* or *Senāni*, the commander of the army, 2. *Purohita*, the chief *brāhmaṇa* adviser of the ruler, 3. *Mahiṣi*, the queen, 4. *Sūta*, the court-minister and chronicler, 5. *Grāmaṇi*, the head of the village or town 6. *Kṣatri*, the chamberlain, 7. *Samgrahitṛ*, the master of the treasury 8. *Bhāgadūta*, the collector of revenue, 9. *Akṣavāpa*, the controller of gambling (dice), 10. *Govikartṛ*, master of forests or destroyers of wild beasts. 11. *Palagala*, the courier.<sup>34</sup> All these are the *rājakṛts* or king makers.

29. सहस्रधा ग्रामणीमरिषन्मनुः सूर्येणास्य यतमानैतु दक्षिणा । *Ṛv.* X-62-11

30. *Taittiriya Samhitā*, II-5-4; *Maitrayiṇī Samhitā*, I-6-5

31. परि त्वासते निधिभिः सखायः कुलपा न ब्राजपतिं चरन्तम् । *Ṛv.* X-179-2

32. बिभ्रद्द्रापिं हिरण्ययं वरुणो वस्त निर्णिजम् । परिस्पषो निषेदिरे ।। *Ṛv.* I-25-13

They are mentioned with Varuṇa who is the divine counterpart of the human king.

33. अन्तर्दूतो रोदसी दस्म ईयते होता निषत्तो मनुषः पुरोहितः । *Ṛv.* III-3-2; VI-8-4; VII-3-3; X-14-12. etc.

34. *Taittiriya Samhitā*, I-8-9-1; *Maitrayiṇī Samhitā*, II-6-5; *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇā*, V-3-1-1.

It is obvious that they were also king's ministers and administrations. They were the persons who actually offer the kingdom to the king with the following words:

“To thee this state is given: thou art the director and regulator, thou art the steadfast and bearer of this or responsibility: to this state is given for agriculture, for well-being, for prosperity, for development.”<sup>35</sup>

The various political units of the Ṛgvedic age were *grāma*, *jana*, *viś* and *rāṣṭra*. The *grāma*, was a group of houses built near each other for purposes of safety. The word *jana* besides meaning ‘man’ as individual, also denoted a clan. This, the Bharatas and the Yādavas are called Yādava *jana*<sup>36</sup> and Bhārata *jana*<sup>37</sup> respectively. Similarly, the people of the two *Vaikarṇa* states who fought against king Sudās are said to have consisted of twenty-one clans.<sup>38</sup> The most famous clans of the Ṛgvedic age were those descended from king Yayāti, viz, the Yadus, Turvaśas, Druhyus, Anus, and Purus,<sup>39</sup> and the term *Pañca-janāḥ*<sup>40</sup> has perhaps been used with the reference to them.

The word *viś* has been used in three senses in the *Ṛgveda* and later *Samhitās*, viz. 1) the people, 2) the subjects of a king and 3) the commoners as distinguished from the priests and the nobles. It is first sense which is important in the present context; and in

35. *Satapatha Brāhmanā*, V-2-1-25

36. श्रवसा यादवं जनम् । Ṛv. VIII-6-48

37. विश्वामित्रस्य रक्षति ब्रह्मेदं भारतं जनम् । Ṛv. III-53-12

38. एकं च यो विंशतिं च श्रवस्या वैकर्णयोर्जनान्राजा न्यस्तः । Ṛv. VII-18-11

39. यदिन्द्राग्निं यदुषु तुर्वशेषु यदुह्युष्वनुषु पूरुषु स्थः । Ṛv. I-108-8

40. इन्द्रियाणि शतकृतो या ते जनेषु पञ्चसु । Ṛv. III-37-9



this sense, the *viśeṣ*, were certainly a bigger unit than the *jana*. In fact, while the word *jana* denotes only a clan,<sup>41</sup> the word *viś* carries the sense of a whole people or nation. It is clear from the terms *Ārya-viś*<sup>42</sup> (Aryan nation) and *Dāsī - viś*<sup>43</sup> (*Dāsa nation*), occurring in the *Ṛgveda*. The foremost of the Vedic deities Indra, Agni, and Soma are similarly called *Viśpatis*<sup>44</sup> lords of the Aryan nations. The word *rāṣṭra* denotes a state or realm under the rule of one monarch. That a feeling of patriotism connected with the idea of *rāṣṭra* is clearly proved in the *Ṛgveda*.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, it is interesting to note that the Aryans, though divided politically, had the feeling not only of being one people but also of belonging to one country. This is fully proved in the famous *nadīstuti* hymn<sup>46</sup> of the *Ṛgveda* in which the seer has praised all the important rivers of the extreme east as well as the extreme west of the region inhabited by the *Ṛgvedic* peoples. A feeling of love for mother land also seems in the *Ṛgvedic mantras*.<sup>47</sup> Thus, the rudiments of nationalism already existed in the *Ṛgvedic* period.

The king used to collect the *bali* or tax. The fact that people called *balihṛt*<sup>48</sup> or the *mantras* on *bali* show that the king periodically

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41. जनस्य गोपा अजनिष्ट जागृविरग्निः सुदक्षः सुविताय नव्यसे । *Rv.* V-11-1  
 42. यदी विशो वृणते दस्ममार्या अग्निं होतारमद्य धीरजायत ।। *Rv.* X-11-4  
 43. विश्वस्मात्सीमधर्माँ इन्द्र दस्यून्विशो दासीरकृणोरप्रशस्ताः । *Rv.* IV-28-4  
 44. इन्द्र प्र णो धितावानं यज्ञं विश्वेभिर्देवेभिः । तिर स्तवान विष्पते ।। *Rv.* III-40-3  
 अग्निमग्निं हवीमभिः सदा हवन्त विष्पतिम् । *Rv.* I-12-2  
 आ वच्यस्व सुदक्ष चम्बोः सुतो विशां वह्निर्न विष्पतिः । *Rv.* IX-108-10  
 45. निर्माया उ त्ते असुरा अभूवन् त्वं च मा वरुण कामयासे ।  
 ऋतेन राजन्ननृतं विविञ्चन् मम राष्ट्रस्याधिपत्यमेहि ।। *Rv.* X-124-5  
 46. *Rv.* X-75  
 47. *Rv.* I-89-4; I-164-33; I-191-6, etc.  
 48. अथो त इन्द्रः केवलीर्विशो बलिहृतस्करत् । *Rv.* X-173-6

was receiving gifts from his subjects. This collection of tax was whether voluntary or involuntary is not known. Sometimes, the obedience was compelled but often the king who dwelt in peace and comfort received holy food and free homage from the people. That the major burden of the taxation falling on the rich is suggested by such a remark as : “Agni is eating woods as the king is eating the rich.”<sup>49</sup>

The position of the king with regard to land is not clear from the *Rgveda*. However, the fact that the *Dānastutis* not mentioning the gift of land, seems to suggest that the king was not regarded as the owner of the land. The evidence of the *Dānastutis* is confirmed by a story found in the *Śatapatha*<sup>50</sup> and *Aitareya Brāhmaṇas*<sup>51</sup> according to which the earth refused to be given when king Viśvakarma offered it to his affiliating priest.

A *mantra* of the *Rgveda* clearly says that the king was elected by the people (*viśaḥ*).<sup>52</sup> A song blessing the king at the time of the his of his coronation occurs both in the *Rgveda* and the *Atharvaveda* with the slight variations.<sup>53</sup> The last *mantra* of this hymn in the *Atharvaveda*, suggests that the election of the king takes place in the *Samīti*. Thus, there is no doubt that the rulers were elected and deposed by the people. But there is no mention of any elected king among the many rulers of this age. This problem is best concluded in the following passage :

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49. पुष्टिर्न रण्वा क्षितिर्न पृथ्वी गिरिर्न बुज्म क्षोदो न शंभु । *Rv.* I-65-4

50. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XIII-7-1 to 15

51. *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, 39-7

52. ता ई विशो न राजानं वृणाना । *Rv.* X-124-8

53. *Rv.* X-173; *AV.* VI-87-8

“We are led to conclude that the people elected the king unanimously, but the meaning of “people,” “elect,” and “unanimously” can only be guessed at. Few scholars consider this an election in the modern sense of the term. It is possible that in the early Vedic period the leader of the ‘Viś’ was chosen by the people and called king, but that in later times certain influential members of the community decided who would be king and others concurred in the decision. Although there is no actual evidence that the monarchy was usually elective in the Vedic times, there are many indications that the ruler was dependent on the support of the aristocracy. And as Jayaswal observed, there was considerable popular participation in the appointment of the king. Even if Vedic kings were accepted rather than chosen by the people there is at least the suggestion of a greater power once enjoyed by the people.”<sup>54</sup>

## ii. Law and Order :

The *R̥gveda Samhitā* does not give much information about the administration of justice and the code of law followed in that time. The word for law or custom in the *R̥gveda* is *dharman*,<sup>55</sup> which later is changed to *dharma*. The *R̥gveda* contains numerous *mantras* clearly stating that all gods are firmly maintained by *R̥ta* (*ddharma*) only.<sup>56</sup> The majesty as well as the universal character of the *R̥ta* are described thus:<sup>57</sup>

54 Charls Drekmier : Community and Kingship in early India, p.2

Q.Chidambar Kulakarni, *Vedic Foundations of Indian Culture*.

55 त्रिणि पदा वि चक्रमे विष्णुर्गोपा अदाभ्यः। अतो धर्माणि धारयन्। *R̥v.* I-22-18

56. *R̥v.* I-77-1; II-9-1; IV-3-4; V-67-4; V-68-1; X-8-5 etc.

57. *R̥v.* IV-23-8 to 10

ऋतस्य हि शुरुयः सन्ति पूर्वीऋतस्य धितिर्वजिनानि हन्ति

ऋतस्य श्लोको बधिरा ततर्द कर्णा बुधानः शुचमान अयोः।।

"Many are the waters of *Rta*; the adoration of *Rta* destroys iniquities; the intelligent and brilliant praise of *Rta* has opened the deaf (ears) of man.

Many are the stable, sustaining delightful forms of the embodied *Rta*; by *Rta* are the pious expectant of food; by *Rta* have the cows entered into a sacrifice.

The worshipper subjecting *Rta* to his will verily enjoys *Rta*, the strength of *Rta* is developed with speed, and is desirous of possessing water; to *Rta* belong the wide and profound heaven and earth; supreme, milch cows, they yield their milk to *Rta*."

The god of *Rta* is Varuṇa, the friend of human beings. While all those who disobey it are severely punished, sinners, who report to their sins and renew their obedience, may be forgiven. Mitra is Varuṇa's friend. He is to see that faith is kept in all agreement between men and men, group and group. Mitra and Varuṇa thus ensure justice for all:<sup>58</sup>

"Indivisible and mighty heaven and earth protect us who, of fortunate birth, have knowledge of you both; let us not incur the displeasure of Varuṇa or of Vāyu, or of Mitra, the best beloved of men."

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ऋतस्य दुष्ठा धरुणानि सन्ति पुरुषि चन्द्रा वपुषे वपुषि ।

ऋतेन दिग्मिषणन्त पृक्ष ऋतेन गाव ऋतमा विवेशुः ।

ऋतं येमान ऋतमिद्वनोत्पृतस्य शुष्मस्तुरया उ गव्युः ।

ऋताय पृथ्वी बहुले गभीरे ऋताय धेनू परमे दुहाते ।

58. ध्यावाभूमी अदिते त्रासिथां नो यो वां जजुः सुजनिमान ऋष्वे ।

मा हेळे भूम वरुणस्य वायोर्मा मित्रस्य प्रियतमस्य नृणाम ॥ *Rv.* VII-62-4

It is necessary to note that the R̥gvedic seers were realistic enough to realize that the moral order could be maintained only by protecting the good and punishing the wicked. Indra is entrusted with this task. He is the king of all that moves and moves not.<sup>59</sup> Further, he is the destroyer of the wicked; he is as well the *maghavan*, the bountiful, who showers best of riches, charms of sweet speech and safety of bodies.<sup>60</sup> *R̥ta* or *Dharma* is universal principle, the unchanging law, the real and eternal, physical and moral, on which the whole universe rests and by which its functioning is regulated. All objects, creatures, even gods, are governed by *R̥ta* or *Dharma*.

So far as criminal law is concerned, the Vedic *Sam̐hitās* mention a number of crimes, which were regarded punishable under law. The *R̥gveda* mentions the instance of R̥jraśva who was blinded by his father for slaying one hundred rams.<sup>61</sup> This, however, appears to be an exceptional case. Typing the criminal to stake was a common form of punishment. The occurrence of the words *Śatadāya*<sup>62</sup> and *Vairadeya*<sup>63</sup> in the *R̥gveda*, shows that the system of wergild (*Vairadeya*) was in force and that a man's wergild was a hundred (cows).

As regards civil law, there is very little information in the Vedic literature. The words *riktha*<sup>64</sup> and *dāya*<sup>65</sup> meaning inheritance occur

59. त्वमग्ने प्रयत दक्षिणां नरं वर्मेव स्यूतं परिपासि विश्वतः। *R̥v.* I-31-15

60. इन्द्र श्रेष्ठानि द्रविणानि देहि चित्तिं दक्षस्य सुभगत्वमस्मे।

पोषं रयीणां मरीष्टिं तनूनां स्वाध्मानां वाचः सुदिनत्वमह्नाम्।। *R̥v.* II-21-6

61. शतं मेषान्वृक्ये चक्षदानमृज्राश्वं तं पितरं चकार। *R̥v.* I-116-16

62. सीव्यत्वपः सूच्याच्छिद्यमानया ददतुं वीरं शतदाय मुक्त्यम्। *R̥v.* II-32-4

63. उत घा नेमो अस्तुतः पुमाँ इति ब्रुवे पणिः। स वैरदेय इत्समः।। *R̥v.* V-61-8

64. न जामये तान्वो रिक्थमारैक्चकार गर्भं सनितुर्निधानम्। *R̥v.* III-31-2

65. श्रमस्य दायं वि भजन्त्येभ्यो यदा यमो भवति हर्म्ये हितः।। *R̥v.* X-114-10

in the *Rgveda*. It is clear that the property belonged to the head of the house, namely the father, and others had only a moral claim on it.

Unmarried girls were supported by their brothers after the death of their father, but if they had none, they were sometimes in grave risk of being ruined.<sup>66</sup>

The land was probably owned by individuals as shown by the reference to measurement of fields in the *Rgveda*.<sup>67</sup> In another hymn of the *Rgveda* lady seer Apāla refers to her father's field (*urvarā*) as a personal possession.<sup>68</sup> It is not certain whether the sons could get any share in the land of the family during their father's lifetime. Very often a family may have lived together with undivided shares in the land. It was also possible for a father who had a daughter, but no sons, to give her son the right to inherit his property.<sup>69</sup>

There is very little information regarding procedure. The word *madhyamaśī*<sup>70</sup> occurring in the *Rgveda* has been interpreted as denoting one who intervened between two parties as arbitrator. If so, arbitration must have been the usual method followed in the *Rgvedic* times. The *Vājasaneyī Samhitā*<sup>71</sup> mentions the plaintiff (*praśnin*), the defendant (*abhipraśnin*), and the judge (*praśnavivāka*). But whether these terms refer to voluntary arbitration or to a court

66. अभ्रातरो न योषणो व्यन्तः पतिरिपो न जनयो दुरेवाः। *Rv.* IV-5-5

67. क्षेत्रमिव वि मुमुस्तेजनेनैकं पात्रमृभवो जेहमानम्। *Rv.* I-110-5

68. असौ च या न उर्वरादिमां तन्वं मम।

अथो ततस्य यच्छिरः सर्वा ता रोमशा कृधि।। *Rv.* VIII-91-6

69. शासद्बहिर्दुहितुर्नस्यं गाद्विद्वौ ऋतस्य दीधितिं सपर्यन्।

पिता यज्ञा दुहितुः सेकमृञ्चन्त्सं शग्येन मनसा दधन्वे।। *Rv.* III-31-1

70. ततो यक्षं वि बाधध्वउग्रे मध्यमशीरिव।। *Rv.* X-97-12

71. *Vajasaneyī Samhitā*, XXX-10



of law is not clear. In the Ṛgvedic period the *grāmaṇī* was exercising both executive and judicial functions.<sup>72</sup> In the *Yajurveda*, the judicial officer is called *grāmya-vādin*<sup>73</sup> with own *Sabhā* or court which proves the separation of executive and judicial functions in the later Vedic age.

### iii. *Sabhā* and *Samīti* :

The *Sabhā* and *Samīti* are regarded as the most important features of the Vedic polity. Despite the distressingly vagues and scanty material about them in Vedic works and numerous cotroversies by modern scholars, it is unanimously held that these two assemblies had a significant place in the Vedic polity and provided opportunities for the people or some prominent individuals to exercise effective control over the ruler and his administration.

In the Ṛgvedic period, every important *grama* had a permanent institution of its own.<sup>74</sup> It is called *Sabhā*. The *Sabhā* means a hall<sup>75</sup> in which, the elders and respectable persons were regularly meet here and talk on important village topics, like cows, cultivation, rain and crops, political, religious, and cultural problems. According to Ludwing, "the *Sabhā* was an assembly not of all the people, but of the Brāhmins and Maghavans or rich patrons."<sup>76</sup> This view can be supported by the expressions '*Sabheya*,' 'worthy of the assembly,' applied to a Brāhmin,<sup>77</sup> '*rayiḥ Sabhāvān*,' wealth fitting for the assembly<sup>78</sup> and so on.

72. दक्षिणवान् प्रथमो हूत एति दक्षिणवान् ग्रामणीरग्रमेति ।। *Rv.* X-107-5

73. *Taittiriya Samhitā*, II-3-1; *Katāka Samhitā*, XI-4; *Maitrayāni Samhitā*, II-2-1

74. *Rv.* VI-28-6 ; VIII-4-9; X-34-6

75. भद्रं गृहं कृणुथ भद्रवाचो बृहद्वो वय उच्यते सभासु ।

76. Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol. II, p.426

77. उताशिष्ठा अनु शृण्वन्ति वह्नयः सभेयो विप्रो भरते मति धना । *Rv.* II-24-13

A *R̥gvedic mantra* clearly says:

"He who is your friend, Indra, is verily possessed of horses, of chariots, of cattle, and is of goodly form: he is ever supplied with food-comprising riches, and delighting all, he enters an assembly."<sup>79</sup>

The '*rayiḥ Sabhāvān*' is also highly significant. The birth of *Sabheya* son was earnestly desired by *R̥gvedic* fathers.

The *R̥gveda* refers to the presence of a *Rāja* (king) in the midst of an assembly.<sup>80</sup> It also can be taken to mean either as the presence of a noble in the midst of *Sabhā* or as the presence of the king in festal assemblies or battles, as interpreted by *Sāyaṇa*.<sup>81</sup> But these *mantras*, give no account to mean that the king attended the assembly as its president.

Perhaps, *Sabhā* was also the place where people entertained themselves by gambling or singing and dancing.<sup>82</sup> The hall of the *Sabhā* is used for the dice-playing. It is a meeting-place for social intercourse.<sup>83</sup> The *Sabhā* was not regarded as a fit place for women to go to, though there is a *mantra* of doubtful significance in the *R̥gveda*.<sup>84</sup>

The *Samiti* is frequently mentioned in the *R̥gveda*.<sup>85</sup> Hillebrant holds that the *Sabhā* and *Samiti* are much the same. According to

78. इळावां एषो असुर प्रजावान्दीर्घो रयिः पृथुबुध्नः सभावान् । *Rv.* IV-2-5

79. अश्वी रथी सुरूप इद्गोमाँ इदिन्द्र ते सखा ।

श्वत्रभाजा वयसा सचते सदा चन्द्रो याति सभामुप ।। *Rv.* VIII-4-9

80. परि सद्मेव पशुमान्ति होता राजा न सत्यः समीतीरियानः । *Rv.* IX-92-6

यत्रौषधीः समग्मतः राजानः समिताविव । *Rv.* X-97-6

81. *Sāyaṇa Rv.* IX-92-6

82. सभामेति कितवः पृच्छमानो जेष्यामीति तन्वा शुशुजानः । *Rv.* X-34-6

83. *Rv.* II-24-6

84. गुहाचरन्ती मनुषो न योषा सभावती विदत्येव सं वाक् । *Rv.* I-167-3

85. *Rv.* I-95-8; IX-92-6; X-97-6; X-166-4, etc.

Ludwig, "the *Samīti* included all people, primarily the *Viśaḥ* (people), but also the Maghavāns and *Brāhmins* if they desired, though the *Sabhā* was their special assemble."<sup>86</sup>

The *Sabhā* and *Samīti*, both words are used in the *R̥gveda*, but it must have been some difference in their meanings.

The king was attending in the sessions of *Samīti* as well as the nobles.<sup>87</sup> Zimmer thinks that it was at the *Samīti* that the king was elected.<sup>88</sup> A *R̥gvedic mantra* clearly says; "May all the people wish the for their king."<sup>89</sup> Although the functions of the *Sabhā* and the *Samīti* cannot be precisely defined, the *mantras* referring to them clearly indicate that both those bodies exercised considerable authority. A famous hymn occurring both in the *R̥gveda* and the *Atharvaveda*, lays great a stress on the spirit of co-operation and unity in this national assembly.<sup>90</sup> A *mantra* of this hymn which have resounded through the ages are as follows :

"Common be the prayer of these (assembled worshippers) common be the aquirement, common the purpose, associated be the desire, I repeat for you a common prayer, I offer for you with a common oblation."<sup>91</sup>

The later *Vedic Samhitās* give some more details about these assemblies. Perhaps it indicates the lines of their development in

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86. Q.Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.II, p-430

87. *R̥v.* IX-92-6 ; X-97-6

88. Q.Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.II p.431

89. विश्वस्त्वा सर्वा वाञ्छन्तु मा त्वद्राष्ट्र मधि भ्रशत् । *R̥v.* X-173-1

90. *R̥v.* X-191 and *Av.* VI-64-1

91. समानो मन्त्रः समितिः समानी समानं मनः सह चित्तमेषाम् ।

समानं मन्त्रमग्नि मन्त्रये वह समानेन वो हविषा जुहोमि ।। *R̥v.* X-191-3

the later Vedic age. *Sabhā* and *Samiti* are called the two daughters of Prajāpati (creator)<sup>92</sup> The members of the *Sabhā* were called *Sabhāsads*,<sup>93</sup> and its president was called the *Sabhāpati*.<sup>94</sup> The *Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā* informs that women did not attend the *Sabhā*.<sup>95</sup> Further, this *Samhitā* mentions *Sabhā* in the sense of the court of the village judge, 'the *grāmaṇyādin*'.<sup>96</sup> The *Vājasaneyī Samhitā* mentions '*Sabhācara*' who is dedicated to *Dharma* (justice).<sup>97</sup> From this it appears that he was a member of the *Sabhā* as law court.

It is thus certain that the *Sabhā* means not only the hall for political discussion but also for the administration of justice. It is not clear whether the whole assembly was doing so or only a chosen body. The special use of the word *Sabhācara*, however, suggests the latter alternative. The available evidence does not clearly show the functions of the *Sabhā* and *Samiti*. It appears that *Samiti* as the larger body which carries on discussion and decision on policy matters as well as legislation, whereas judicial work falls chiefly within the purview of the *Sabhā* though the latter has the right to discuss political matters also. These two bodies exercise effective control not only in general administration but also over the person of king. The fact that a wayward king could not easily save himself from the wrath of the people, is proved by the example of Duṣtarītu, king of the Śrñjayas, who was disposed from a principality that had existed for ten generations.<sup>98</sup>

92. *Av.* VII-12-1

93. *Av.* VII-72-2; XIX-55-6

94. *Vājasaneyī Samhitā*, XVI-24; *Taittiriya Samhitā*, IV-5-3-2 etc.

95. *Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā*, IV-7-4

96. *Maitrayani Samhitā*, II-2-1 etc

97. *Vājasaneyī Samhitā*, XXX-6

98. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇā*, XII-9-3-1

#### iv. R̥gvedic War-Weapons :

The *R̥gveda* mentions various weapons, which are used in the war. These weapons were made of stones, wood, bones, and metals. This shows a sort of development in the aspect too, at different stages through which R̥gvedic culture had passed.

*Āyudha*<sup>99</sup> is a general name for weapons. The bow and arrow were the principal weapons of the R̥gvedic warrior, and the word *Āyudha* is used to designate them only. Every fighter was armed with the bow and arrow, besides other weapons.

The god Indra's *Vajra* was most effective weapon. It had been first made of stone<sup>100</sup> and then of bone<sup>101</sup> before it was made of metal.<sup>102</sup> The *Vajra* was adamantine, undecaying, fiery, scorching, and never-failing. Unlike the stone weapons hurled by Aryan fighter against his enemy, it was "undecaying," because it was always coming back to Indra's hand and could be used again and again. It was, therefore, the great, the deadliest, the dreaddest and the most effective weapon that the Aryan could imagine.<sup>103</sup>

The principal weapon of the R̥gvedic fighter was bow and arrow. It was necessary for a man (warrior) always to go out armed. He was called *dhanvan*.<sup>104</sup> The bow was composed of a stout staff bent into carved shape (*vakra*), and of a bow-string (*Śya*) made of a strip of

99. युधे यदिष्णान आयुधान्युधायमाणो निरिणाति शत्रून् ।। *Rv.* I-61-13

100. इन्द्रासोमा वर्तयतं दिवस्यर्यग्नितप्तेऽभिर्युवामश्म हन्मभिः । *Rv.* VII-104-5

101. इन्द्रो दधीचो अस्थभिः वृत्रण्यप्रतिष्कृतः जघान नवतीर्नव ।। *Rv.* I-84-13

102. इन्द्रस्य वज्रः श्रन्थिता हिरण्ययः । *Rv.* I-57-2

अयच्छथा बाह्वोर्वज्रमायास मघारयो । *Rv.* I-52-8

103. A.C. Das, *R̥gvedic Culture*, p.331

104. अर्हन्विभर्षि सायकानि धन्वान् । *Rv.* II-33-10

cow-hide, which joined to the ends. The tips of the bow, when the string was fastened, were called *ārtni* and relaxed when not in actual use, the bow was specially strung up when needed for shooting.”<sup>105</sup>

The arrow was called *iṣu*, *bāṇa*, *śara*, *śarya* or *śalya*.<sup>106</sup> The arrow was usually consisted of three parts, viz. the shaft (*śatya*)<sup>107</sup> which was made of a reed, still known as *Śara*. The head was made either of horn or metal. It is called ‘*ayo-mukham*’.<sup>108</sup> The feather socket (*parṇa-dhi*) to which feather were fastened to make it fly swiftly through the air.<sup>109</sup> The arrow is shot from the ear place. The *R̥gveda* describes as ‘having the ear for its place of birth; (*karṇa-yoni*)’.<sup>110</sup>

The arrow-holder (quiver) which is carried by every bowman put on his back, is called *iṣudhi*<sup>111</sup> or *niṣanga*.<sup>112</sup> The bow-man used a leather hand-guard, for the protection of hand from the impact of the bow-string. It is called *hastaghna*.<sup>113</sup> The points of the arrow-heads were sometimes poisoned.<sup>114</sup>

The *Paviṛa* has evidently the meaning of ‘sword’ in the *R̥gveda*.<sup>115</sup> According to the *Nirukta*,<sup>116</sup> it denotes a lance. The *Pavi*<sup>117</sup> in the

105. Mecdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol. I, p.388-389

106. यत्र बाणाः संपतन्ति कुमारा विशिखा इव । *R̥v.* VI-75-17

दस्यूज्विम्यँश्च पुरुहूत एवैर्हत्वा पृथिव्यां शर्वा नि बर्हिः । *R̥v.* I-100-18

शर्यैरभिद्युं पृतनासु दुष्टरं । *R̥v.* I-119-10

107. शर्यामसनमनुद्युन् । *R̥v.* I-148-4

108. *R̥v.* VI-75-11.

109. यदन्तरिक्षे पतयन्ति पर्णिनो दिद्यतस्तिग्ममूर्धानः । *R̥v.* VI-46-11

110. तस्य साध्वीरिषवो याभिरस्यति नृचक्षसो दृशये कर्णयोनयः । *R̥v.* II-24-8

111. इषुधिः सङ्काः पृतनाश्च सर्वाः पृष्टे निनद्धो जयति प्रसूतः । *R̥v.* VI-75-5

112. दुर्मायवो दुरेव मर्त्यासो निषङ्गिणो रिपवो हन्त्वासः । *R̥v.* III-30-15

113. हस्तघ्नो विश्वा वयुनानि विद्वान्मुमान्मुमांसं परि पातु विश्वतः । *R̥v.* VI-75-14

114. आलाक्ता या रुरुशीर्ष्यथो यस्या अयो मुखम् । *R̥v.* VI-75-15

115. यो जनान् महिषां इवातितस्थौ पवीरवान् । *R̥v.* X-60-3

116. *Yāska, Nirukta*, XII-30

117. त्रयः पवयो मधुवाहने रथे । *R̥v.* I-34-2

*Ṛgveda*, means a metal tire with sharp edge. But it also occasionally means a weapon, like a share fore breaking down rocks and javelin to be hurled against an enemy.<sup>118</sup> The name *asi*<sup>119</sup> is also something like a sword (*pavīra*). Though it denotes the sacrificial knife, but it was also used in the war.<sup>120</sup> The *Kārpāṇa*<sup>121</sup> is also meant as a sword. It occurs in the *Ṛgveda*, with which Indra is said to have fought against the Vṛtras. The *Kārpāṇa* is the same as the modern *Kṛpāṇa* (sword).

The *Cakra*<sup>122</sup> (discus) is another weapon used in the war. It was a weapon of Indra, in the *Ṛgveda*. The later Purāṇic literature mentions that Kṛṣṇa cut down Śiśupāla's head with the help of his *Cakra*.

The *Srakti*<sup>123</sup> and *Śakti*<sup>124</sup> are used as the weapon of a spear in the Ṛgvedic age. The *Ṛṣti*<sup>125</sup> is also mentioned as a weapon. The *Ṛgveda* describes the *Ṛṣti* as held in the hand of Maruts. The lance is called *Sṛka*<sup>126</sup> in the *Ṛgveda*.

The *āra*<sup>127</sup> is Pūṣan's characteristic weapon, being a good with a pointed metallic end.

118. उत पव्या रथानामद्रिं भिन्दन्त्योजसा । *Ṛv.* V-52-9

119. असिं सूनां नवं चरूमादेधयान आचितं विश्वस्मादिन्द्र उत्तरः । *Ṛv.* X-86-18

120. *Atharvaveda*, XI-9-1

121. त्वं तान् वृत्रहत्ये चोदयो नृन् कार्पणे शूर वज्रिवः । *Ṛv.* X-22-10

122. अनायुधासो असुरा अदेवश्चक्रेण ताँ अप वप ऋजीषिन् । *Ṛv.* VIII-96-9

123. अव स्रक्तीर्वेश्यावृश्चदिन्द्रः । *Ṛv.* VII-18-17

124. वयोधाः कृच्छेश्रितः शक्तीवन्तो गभीराः । *Ṛv.* VI-75-9

125. अंसेष्वेषां नि मिमृक्षु ऋष्टयः साकं जज्ञिरे स्वधाया दिवे नरः । *Ṛv.* I-64-4

126. सुके यत्वा प्रत्यहन्देव एकः । *Ṛv.* I-32-12

127. वि पूषन्नारया तुद पणेरिच्छ हृदि प्रियम् । *Ṛv.* VI-53-6

The *Vāśī*<sup>128</sup> in the *R̥gveda*, is used in the sense of hatchet, which is said to be held by Tvastr̥, the divine carpenter. It is described in the *R̥gveda* as a weapon of Maruts.<sup>129</sup> The *Paraśu* (axe)<sup>130</sup> is used for cutting wood and sometimes used in the battles. There is another word *Parśu*<sup>131</sup> which originally meant a rib-bone. Sāyaṇa says “the rib-bone of a horse, the edge of which is as sharp as a sword, and fit for cutting.”<sup>132</sup> The *R̥gveda* mentions that the warriors armed with large and heavy sickles (*Pṛthuparśu*) proceeding to battle.

The *Svadhiti* (axe)<sup>133</sup> is used for dissecting the sacrificial horse and also for cutting wood. But, it was also a weapon of war. The *R̥gveda* describes as, with the help of *Svadhiti*, the god Indra is said to bring forth excellent water.<sup>134</sup> The word in this *mantra* probably means the thunderbolt; but it also means the axe, with which Indra was to cut the clouds open.<sup>135</sup> The *Pāśa*,<sup>136</sup> is another weapon used in the war. It is made of rope and is like a noose. It must have been a very common weapon of the gods and as like Varuṇa, Soma, etc.<sup>137</sup> It may be, the horsemen used for capturing the enemies by flinging it over their necks, from a distance.<sup>138</sup>

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128. वशीमेको विभर्ति हस्त आयासीमन्तर्देवेषु निष्ठुविः। *Rv.* VIII-29-3

129. ये पृषतीभि ऋष्टिभिः साकं वाशीभिरज्जिभिः। *Rv.* I-37-2

130. अभीदु शक्रः परशुर्यथा वनं पात्रेव बिन्दन्सत एति रक्षसः। *Rv.* VII-104-21

131. प्राचा गव्यन्तः पृथुपर्शवो ययुः। *Rv.* VII-83-1

132. Sāyaṇa

133. यदश्वस्य क्रविषो माक्षिकाश यद्वा स्वरौ स्वधितौ रिप्तमस्ति। *Rv.* I-162-9

134. श्येनो गृध्राणां स्वदितिर्वनानां सोमः पवित्रमत्येति रेभन्। *Rv.* IX-96-6

135. A.C. Das, *R̥gvedic Culture*, p.335

136. पाशा आदित्या रिपवे विचृताः। *Rv.* II-27-16

137. उदुत्तमं वरुण पाश मस्मदवाधमं वि मध्यमं श्रथाय। *Rv.* I-24-15

138. गृध्णाति रिपुं निधया निधापतिः सुकृत्तमा मधुनो भक्षमाशत। *Rv.* IX-83-4



The warriors had used some protection materials in the war. The word *Kavaca* is first time used in the *Atharvaveda*,<sup>139</sup> in the sense of breast-plate. The word *Varman*<sup>140</sup> occurs in the *Rgveda*, in the sense of 'body-armour' or 'coat of mail.' The warriors were putting on the *Śipra* (helmet)<sup>141</sup> to cover their heads to protect their heads in the war. The noble warriors were put this on coats of nail called *drāpis*.<sup>142</sup> But, in the *Rgveda*, *drāpi* is sometimes used in the sense of garments.

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139. *Atharvaveda*, XI-10-22

140. त्वमग्ने प्रयत दक्षिणं नरं वर्मेव स्यूतं परिपासिविष्वतः। *Rv.* I-32-15

141. आ त्वा सुषिप्र हरयो वहन्तूश्नहव्यानि प्रति नो जुषस्व। *Rv.* I-101-10

142. भिभ्रद् द्रापिं हिरण्ययं वरुणो वस्त निर्णिजम्। *Rv.* I-25-13

पिशङ्गम् द्रापिं प्रति मुञ्चते कविः। *Rv.* IV-53-2

## 9. Religion and Philosophy in the R̥gvedic Age

### i. Religion :

The R̥gvedic people were nature worshippers. They were deeply affected by the apparently mysterious working of the awe-inspiring forces of nature. They looked upon all nature as a living presence. The luminaries who follow a fixed course across the sky are the *devas* or gods. Naturally, the sense of the dependence of human welfare on the powers of nature, the unexplained mysteries of whose working invests them with almost a 'super-natural' (divine character), finds its expression in various forms of worship.

Although the number of gods has increased, yet there existed no fixed seniority amongst them. There existed a sort of communism amongst gods as too many offices, powers and functions were held in common by them. At one time the same mighty god is described as dependent on others. This was perhaps due to the reason that *R̥gveda* was not composed at one time by one person. Macdonell has pointed out that - "in the frequent hymns addressed to the 'Viśvedevas' or 'All-gods', all the deities, even the lesser ones, are praised in succession, and that as the great mass of the Vedic hymns was composed for the ritual of the Soma-offering, which included the worship of almost the pantheon, the technical priest could not but know the exact relative position of each god in that ritual."<sup>1</sup>

According to the *R̥gveda*<sup>2</sup> and the *Atharvaveda*,<sup>3</sup> the number of the Vedic gods is thirty-three. In one *mantra* of the *R̥gveda*, eleven of

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1. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, Strassburg, 1897, p.16

2. *R̥v.* III-6-9 ; VIII-28-1; 30-2; 35-3; 57-2; IX-92-4

3. *Atharvaveda*, X-7-13

the gods are addressed as being in heaven, eleven on earth, and eleven in waters, i.e., atmosphere.<sup>4</sup> The *Atharvaveda* similarly divides the gods into dwellers in the heaven, air and earth.<sup>5</sup> The *Brāhmaṇas* also give the number of the gods as thirty-three.

Yāska, following the triple classification of the *Ṛgveda*, divides the different gods enumerated in the fifth chapter of the *Naighaṇṭuka Khāṇḍa* into the three orders, namely, *Ṁrthivīsthāna* (terrestrial), *antarikṣasthāna* (areial or intermediate) and *dyusthāna* (celestial).<sup>6</sup>

1. Terrestrial gods (*Ṁrthivīsthāna*): Ṁrthvī, Agni, Soma, Bṛhaspati and the rivers.
2. Areial gods (*Antarikṣasthāna*): Indra, Apānapāt, Rudra, Vāyu, Parjanya, Āpaḥ, and Mātariśvān.
3. Celestial gods (*dyusthāna*): Dyaus, Varuṇa, Mitra, Sūrya, Savitr, Pūṣan, Viṣṇu, the Ādityās, Uṣas and the Aśvins.

Yāska, further says that in the opinion of his predecessors there are only three deities, Agni on earth, Vāyu or Indra in air, and Sūrya in heaven.<sup>7</sup>

This view is clearly based on a *mantra* of the *Ṛgveda* which says- 'may Sūrya protect us from heaven, Vāta from air, Agni from the earthly regions'.<sup>8</sup> Yāska, however, does not seem to agree with the view that

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4. ये देवासो दिव्येकादश स्थ पृथिव्यामध्येकादश स्थ । *Rv.* I-139-11

5. *Atharvaveda*, X-9-12

6. Yāska, *Nirukta*, VII-XII

7. तिस्र एव देवता इति नैरुक्ताः अग्निः पृथिवीस्थानः वायोर्वेन्द्रो वान्तरिक्षस्थानः । सूर्योद्युस्थानः । तासां महाभागादेकैकस्था अपि बहूनि नामधेयानि भवन्ति अपि वा कर्मप्रतक्त्वात् ।  
Yāska, *Nirukta*, VII-5.

8. सूर्यो नो दिवस्यातु वातो अन्तरिक्षात् । अग्निहिर्न पार्थिवेभ्यः । *Rv.* X-158-1

all the gods are only manifestations of the three representative deities, though he concedes that all the gods.

The Ṛgvedic deities are free from taint, from hate; none of them is ever amiss. All are further of *Ṛtas*, pure in spirit and infallible. Agni is the guardian of *Ṛta* and he is *Satya*, Indra is *Satya* and *Ṛta*. Similarly Sūrya, Uṣas, Aditi, Mitra, Varuṇa, are all intimately associated with *Ṛta*. The deities again represent the fine qualities of human beings such as strength, valour, kindness, nobility, love, tenderness, beneficence, sympathy, as well as wrath and fury. Each one of the deities is described as the best of sages, best of poets, best of heroes, most affectionate, the best friend and the best comforter. No one can surpass them in beauty. They manifest in love. They bring bliss. No wonder that the seers address them as father, Mother, Son, Brother and Friend.

Similarly, the Ṛgvedic seers have spoken of the deity not only as king (*rāja*), as emperor (*sāmrāt*) and as queen of the world (*buvanasya patnī*), as leader (*praṇeta*), as protector (*gopa*), as architect (*viśvakarma*) and as physician (*bhiṣak*). Again, in a symbolic way, he has been called 'Suparṇa', the beautiful winged (bird), and through metonymy, the material for worship has been transformed into the name of the deity, e.g., Agni means the effulgent being, and Soma (the Soma libation) the ultimate reality. Similarly certain natural phenomena have been transformed through the imagination into divinities, e.g. Uṣas, Sarasvatī, Day, Night, Heaven and earth, the sun, and so on. There are deities personifying death (*Mṛtyu*) and faith (*Śraddhā*) and other deities like Indra (warrior and leader) and Varuṇa (judge, guardian of law) who represent ideal human qualities.

## ii. Philosophy:

The religion of the *Rgveda* is usually described as the worship of *Devas*, who are nearly all personifications of the phenomena of nature. Yet a deeply abstract philosophical ideas are cropped up in some hymns as a reminder of long journey made from primitive polytheism to systematic philosophy, through the stages of naturalistic polytheism, monotheism, and monism.

One god was therefore identified with another, or gods were invoked in pairs or conjointly in groups. Systematization took the form of the classification of the gods into different categories or of the amalgamation of them all into one comprehensive group of the "All-gods". This systematization was but a step forward towards the more logical monotheism. The monotheistic trend flashes forth even in some of the hymns celebrating gods like Indra, Varuṇa, and Savitr when the deity being addressed is treated as the Supreme God ruling over the entire universe. Thus, in *Rv.* I-101-3 Indra's ordinances are said to be obeyed by heaven and earth, Varuṇa and Sūrya; while in *Rv.* II-38-9 it is said that Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Aryaman and Rudra cannot resist the ordinance of Savitr. In *Rv.* X-121 Hiranyagarbha is called the one Lord of every creature, the one king of the breathing and winking world, the one soul of gods, and the one supreme god among gods.

There are, however, a number of *mantras* which clearly and indubitably assert the unity of God. *Rv.* I-164-4 asks " who has seen the first-born, when the boneless one bore the one with bones? Where

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9. को ददर्श प्रथमं जायमानमस्थन्वन्तं यदनस्था बिभर्ती ।

भूम्या असुरसृगात्मा क्व स्वित्को विद्वांसमुप गात्रष्टमेतत् ।। *Rv.* I-164-4

is the life, the blood, the self of this *bhūmī* (universe)? Has anyone approached the knowing one to ask this question?"<sup>9</sup> As if in answer to this question, a *mantra* of the same hymn affirms that the central principle was the genderless *Sat* (the "real") which, though one, was called by various names, Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni, Yama, Mātariśvan, etc.<sup>10</sup> Thus, in the some of the hymns of the *Rgveda*, which designate indifferently the Supreme or Absolute as 'He' or 'It' is reflected the usual vacillation between monotheism and monism met with in all philosophies.

The problem of the origin and nature of the world-stuff is a philosophical one, and is not neglected by the *Rgvedic* seers. *Rv.* X-190-1 tells that from heat (*tapas*) were produced *Rta* and *Satya*; then, night, the ocean, and *samvatsara* (year) were in succession ....<sup>11</sup> *Rv.* X-72-2 says that *sat* was produced from *asat*.<sup>12</sup> From the mythological point of view, each one of the gods in turn is said to be the creator of the universe, the universe being sometimes looked upon as the finished product of the carpenter's and joiner's skill. For ex. *Rv.* X-31-7 asks "what was the wood, which the tree, out of which they fashioned heaven and earth?"<sup>13</sup> *Rv.* X-121 takes up the problem of creation on a monotheistic level and tells that *Hiranyagarbha* arose from the great waters, pervading the universe, and thus created the world out of eternally pre-existing matter.

10. इन्द्रं मित्रं वरुणमग्निमाहुरथो दिव्यः स सुपर्णो गरुत्मान् ।

एकं सद्विप्रा बहुधा वदन्त्यग्निं यमं मातरिश्वानमाहुः ।। *Rv.* I-164-46

11. ऋतं च सत्यं चाभीदत्तपसोऽध्यजायत ।

ततो रात्र्यजायत ततः समुद्रो अर्णवः ।। *Rv.* X-190-1

12. ब्रह्मणस्पतिरेता सं कर्मार इवाधमत् ।

देवानां पूर्व्ये युगेऽसतः सदायत ।। *Rv.* X-72-2

13. किं स्विद्वनं क उ स वृक्ष आस यतो ध्यावापृथिवी निष्टतक्षुः । *Rv.* X-31-7

In the *Nāsadīya-Sūkta*, a famous hymn of the *Rgveda*, the idea not only of god being the sole ruler of universe but also of his being the sole reality before creation expressed in the most effective language. One *mantra* of the hymn describes the condition before the creation of universe as follows:

“Death was not nor at that period immortality, there was no indication of day or night; that one unbreathed upon breathed of his own strength, other than that there was nothing else whatever.”<sup>14</sup>

The last *mantra* of this hymn is notable in the entire religious literature of the world for its boldness and frankness. The seer does not want to say dogmatically whether god is both the creator and ruler of universe or only its ruler. The idea is finely expressed as below :

“ Here from whom this creation arose, he may uphold it, or he may not (no one else can); he who is its superintendent in the highest heave, he assuredly knows, or if he knows not (no one else does).”<sup>15</sup>

The word *māyā* in the *Rgveda* generally denotes “occult power” applicable in a good sense to gods and in a bad sense to demons. In the *Rgveda*, X-54-2 it is used in the sense of ‘illusion’ , thus forestalling later *Vedānta* philosophy.

In the *Purṣa-Sūkta* (X-90) the body of the *Puruṣa* is said to be the original material, as it were, out of which world is made. The gods

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14. नमृत्युरासीदमृतं न तर्ही न रात्र्या अह्ना आसीत्प्रकेतः।

आनीदवातं स्वधया तदेकं तस्माद्भान्यन्न परः किं चनास।। *Rv.* X-129-2

15. इयं विसृष्टिर्यत आ आबभूव यदि वा दधे यदि वा न।

यो अस्याध्यक्षः परमे व्योमन्त्सो अङ्ग वेद यदि वा न वेद।। *Rv.* X-129-7

are the agents of creation, the act of creation is a sacrifice, and the Puraṣa is the victim. Although anthropomorphism pushed to the last limit, is responsible for the greatness of God; and the unity of world and god, being described in the terms of the gigantic dimensions of the Puraṣa, the hymn X-90 is a sort of crude allegory of the theory of creation from the One-Absolute found in the *Nāsadīya-Sūkta*. Only, here the Supreme reality becomes the positive Puruṣa - the begetter as well as the begotten: "From the Puruṣa, *Virāṭ* was born, and from *Virāṭ* again the Puruṣa."

Mention may also be made of a famous *mantra* found in the *Rgveda* (I-164-20) which is as under:

"Two birds associated together, and mutual friends, take refuge in the same tree: One of them eats the sweet fig; the other, abstaining from food, merely looks on."<sup>16</sup>

This *mantra* has been understood through the ages as mentioning god, soul, and matter. The tree is symbolic of matter, the bird eating the sweet fig is the soul which has to enjoy the fruit of action, while the bird that does not eat is god who being perfect is not subject to the fruit of action.

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16. द्वासुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते ।

तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वाद्वत्त्यनश्नत्यो अभि चाकशीति ।। *Rv.* I-164-20



## 10. Science in the Ṛgveda

The *Ṛgveda* is, however, not text-book on science and aesthetics. Yet, the *Ṛgveda* has freely incorporated some elements of physical science in its *mantras*. Besides on such basic elements, it may be said that the people during Ṛgvedic period had having the knowledge of the physical science.

### Astronomy :

Astronomy or the science of strars was much advanced in Ṛgvedic era and the seers based their time-reckoning science on Astronomy.

The *Ṛgveda*, states that it rains during the *Dāksinayana* or the southward journey of Sun. The Southward journey of the Sun is mentioned as *Pitryaṇa*. *Devayana* or the northward journey of the Sun is mentioned in *Ṛv.* x-18-1.

The *Ṛgveda* IV-57-5 presents a request to the deity *Śunāsīrau* to shower the waters prepared in the heavens. This statement clearly indicates that the rains were connected with *Śunāsīrau* (Canis major and canis minor) which is nothing else than *Mṛga* Nakstra.

These two statements together prove that the Ṛgvedic seers that the rains begin with the summer solstice in India, and at the time of the summer solstice, the sun resided in Canis major and Canis minor (the *Mṛgaśīras Nakṣatra*). Thus, it is clear that the seers had linked astronomy with the Meteorology or the science of climate.

The *Ṛgveda* I-103-13, states : "who awakened Rbhus ? The Sun answered that the Dog awakened, because today is the end of the year." Here the Dog means the *Mṛga Nakṣatra*. Rbhus means the

clouds. The clouds were awakened by it, that means the clouds started showering the rains. The Sun was at Mṛga when the rains began in that ancient era.

While observing the movement of the Moon among the fixed stars, the Ṛgvedic seers found out five planets which have mentioned in the *Ṛgveda*. Thus distinction between the moving planets and the non-moving stars is shown.

### **Cosmogony :**

The Vedic theory of creation is best stated in the creation hymn (*Nāsadīya sūkta* X-129). Visvakarma, the Supreme Architect, constructed this universe with the help of gods (*Ṛv.* X-81-83). They wove materials into a systematic pattern (*Ṛv.* I-130). Some others shaped it by blasting and smelting (*Ṛv.* V-72-2). This universe was constructed in stages as house. According to *Puruṣa-sūkta* (X-90) the Universal Man was sacrificed and there came into being the Earth, the sky, the Wind, the Moon and the Sun. Another hymn of the *Ṛgveda* (*Ṛv.* I-115) traces the origin of everything to Sun who is the soul of everything that moves and moves not. Agni, Soma, Sūrya, Indra, Rudra, are all individually or collectively praised in different hymns as Makers of this world.

### **Mathematics :**

The advance study in Astronomy was based equally on advanced knowledge of number, numericals, methods of addition, subtraction, division and multiplication, etc. In fact, the main branches of mathematics- Arithmetic, Geometry, Trigonometry and Algebra were considerably developed in the Vedic period.

The R̥gvedic hymns make several references to Arithmetic principles. For, eg, mention of the digit 99 is in R̥v.I-84-13. Reference to functions is in R̥v. X-90. etc.

For the sake of metrical facility, the numbers which are large, are expressed in additive method. For instance, an expression for 3339 in R̥gveda X-52-6.

त्रीणि शता त्रीसहस्राणि त्रिंशच्च नव च ।

as three hundreds and three thousands and thirty and nine.  
The R̥gvedic *mantra* runs thus:

त्रीणि शतात्रि सहस्राप्यग्निं  
त्रिंशच्च देवा नव चासपर्यन् ॥

An idea of the circumference of a circle is described thus:

कासीत्प्रमा प्रतिमा किं निदानम् ।  
आज्यं किमासीत् परिधिः क आसीत् ॥  
छन्दः किमासीत् प्रउगं किमुक्थं ।  
यद्देवा देवमजयन्त विश्वे । R̥v. X-130-3

(What is the measurer? who measures and counts all ? What is the cause and what the essence, like ghee, in this world ? What *circumference* ? What is the independent and what the praise worthy object ? The Supreme Lord whom the learned have worshipped.)

Principle of *trita* (त्रित) is mentioned in the R̥gveda. The *mantra* is as below:

अभिस्ववृष्टिं मदे अस्य युध्यतो  
रध्वीरिव प्रवणे सत्सुरूतयः ।  
इन्द्रो यद्वज्री धृषमाणो अन्धसा  
भिनद्वलस्य परीधीरिव त्रितः ॥ R̥v. I-52-5

(To him as in wild joy he fought with him who stayed the rain helpers sped like swift streams down a slope. When Indra, thunder-armed, made bold by some draughts, as *Trita* cleaveth Vala's fences, cleft him through.)

Surface of a cylinder is mentioned as below:

त्रितः कूपेऽवहितो देवान्हवत ऊतये  
तच्छुश्राव बृहस्पतिः कृण्वन्तंहूरणादुरूम् । *Rv.* I-105-7

(*Trita*, when buried in the well, calls on the gods to succor him. That call of his, Brhaspati heard and released him from distress-Mark this my woe, ye earth and heaven).



## CHAPTER - IV

### MODERN APPROACH TO THE HISTORICAL ELEMENTS IN THE ṚGVEDA-AN APPRAISAL

The modern approach to the Ṛgvedic sources of the historical elements explained in the preceeding chapter is examined here. The Rgveda is no doubt a valuable record of ancient achievements in the fields of religion socety, art science and culture. Geography of the Rgvedic India has also been traced to the vedic statements indicating the areas of the gradual expansion of the land through the ages. Many of the modern interpreters regards the Rgveda as a predominantly Indo-European document and therefore its interpretation demands the basis of comparative philology and comparative mythology traditional commentators do not agree with many views of modern interpreters. In the Nirukta Yāska mentions different schools of thought such as the Yajñikas the Vaiyakaraṇas the Nairuktas, the Aitihāsikas and others who tried to interpret Veda in accordance with their own thought.

#### **i. Original home of Aryans : Some Theories**

Tracing the location of the original home of the Aryans is a very difficult issue and a lot of controversy surrounds it. The scholars of different countries have striven hard to prove that their country was

the original habitat of Aryanas. There is no written record to the effect of Aryan original house prior to their migration to India. In its absence the history of the Aryans can be reproduced only by making a comparative study of the important and ancient languages of the world. The person who was the first to discover the true course of this similarity was Sir William Jones who in his famous address to the '*Asiatic Society of Bengal*' delivered in 1786 A.D. :

"The Sanskrit language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either; yet bearing to both of them a strong affinity, both in the roots of verbs, and in the forms of grammar, that could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed, that no philologist could examine them all without believing them to have sprung from *some common source*, which perhaps no longer exists. There is a similar reason, thought not quite so forceful, for supposing that both the Gothic and the celtic, though blended with a different idiom, had same origin with the Sanskrit; and the old Persian might be added to the same family."<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, the forefathers of the speakers of these languages must have lived together at one place sometime. This view has further been supported by the study of climatic conditions, flora and fauna and physiographical conditions known to them.

What was the name of that race ? Where did it first live and when did it migrate to other places in different groups, all this have been made most controversial. Different theories have been propounded

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1. Q. P.L. Bhargava, *India in the Vedic Age*, p-47

by scholars like Max Muller, Schrader (*Pre-historic Antiquities of the Aryan peoples*), Taylor (*origin of the Aryans*), A.C. Dass (*R̥gvedic India*), B.G. Tilak (*Arctic Home in Veda*), L.D. Kalla (*The Home of the Aryans*), Dr. Sampurnanand (*Aryon kā Adidesa*) etc.

In the beginning, the name given to this race was based on the hypothetical name of the original language since the linguistic similarity was found in the languages spoken from India to Europe, the first common name given to that language was 'Indo-European.' Another name given to that language was 'Indo-German.' This name was given with a view to giving more importance to the Germans as this type of research was initiated by the German scholars. However, this name could not become popular. Ultimately 'Indo-Aryan' or 'Aryan' became the popular designation for that language. Though in the beginning, this name was used as a common designation of the Sanskrit and Zend languages, it also began to be used for the ancient common mother language of all languages of this stock. On the basis of that name, the speakers of that hypothetical common language, too, were called Aryans. Thus the present classification of human races into Aryan, Semetic, Mangolian etc. was based upon the linguistic principle. Attempts were also made by anthropologists to study the classification of human races on the basis of human remains or skulls.

The intention of European scholars behind establishing the existence of a common Indo-Aryan language and thereby propounding the theory of common race, was this that firstly, they wanted to prove that Aryan race groups; secondly, they are the direct diascendants of the Aryans, hence pure Aryan in comparison to

Aryans of India. But no literary evidence corroborates these assumptions of the European scholars. On the other hand literary evidences amply justify that the Aryan people were divided into two groups, one belonging to India and the other to Iran. *Sapta-sindhu* region was the cradle of Aryan culture. Both groups developed high culture and produced literatures of high calibre the former group produced the Veda and the latter group the *Avesta*.

For over hundred years the linguistic scholars, the archaeologists, the historians and others have tried in vain to find out the original homeland of Aryans. Their views are as diametrical to each other as east is to the west. As a consequence, there are as many theories held by many authors.

#### **Theory of Europe as Original Homeland of Aryans :**

The most important theory which held the field for a long time was that the Aryans originally lived in central Asia. The geographical distribution of the idioms of Indo-European speech-family, therefore, does suggest that the original home of the Indo-European is to be sought rather in Europe than in Asia. Moreover of all the living Indo-European languages of the present day, it is Lithuanian and not Sanskrit (even if considered a living language) or any of its daughter dialects, that has kept closest to the basic idiom reconstructed by comparative philology.

These two fundamental facts make a strong *prima facie* case against the theory that India was the original home of the Aryans.<sup>2</sup>

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2. R.C. Mujumdar, *The Vedic Age*, p-206



Prof. Max Muller, a great German scholar, in his book '*Lectures on the science of languages.*' proves central Asia as the original homeland of Aryans. He is of a opinion that the information, regarding the early Aryans could be gathered from two main sources. They are Vedic literature and the Iranian book *Zend-Āvestā*. It is evident from the study of these two works that some time in history the inhabitants of India and Iran must have lived together because much affinity in the culture and civilization of the two communities is discernible. The inhabitants of both the countries were nature worshippers. Agriculture and the cattle breeding was their main occupation. The animals like horse were known to them.

These considerations prove that the original homeland must have been some where near Iran or India. Taking into account the geographical position of the original homeland of the Aryans, some historians have arrived at the conclusion that Central Asia was the original homeland of the Aryans, wherefrom they went to Europe, Iran and India.

### **Objections:**

1. Such a small area could not accommodate such a vast majority of people. Moreover the region is not at all fertile. Above all honey is absent in this region which we know that the early Aryans were fond of honey.

2. Some scholars have tried to counteract this critic. According to Strabo in the first century A.D. this region was very productive. He has referred a region known as '*Karman*' which was very productive at that time, but not at present. Moreover history is a testimony to

the fact that climatical conditions often undergo a change. There is every possibility that Aryans might have lifted in this region because of its small size.

In this connection Budha Prakash writes- 'scholars have tried to re-construct an hypothetical Indo-European language on the basis of linguistic equations, based on the data of existing languages, and formulate the cultural traits of its speakers from its stand point. But this method is very unsatisfactory since by it one would conclude as A.B. Keith remarked, that the Indo-European knew butter but not milk, snow and feet but not rain and hands."<sup>3</sup>

On the contrary, a romantic reaction, which identified languages with race set in soon and was given powerful expression by Penka who declared language to be "organic product of an organism subject to organic laws." Penka thinks that Scandinavia was the cradleland of these people.<sup>4</sup>

**This view is again objected as below:**

1. In fact, at the beginning, every natural language must have been confined within a not too large racial group though it by no means follows that there could not have originated more than one language within one racial group at beginning.
2. Only it is necessary to remember that the racial group, within which the primitive Indo-European language originated, may have itself adopted a non-Indo-European language in course of its history or may have altogether passed out existence.<sup>5</sup>

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3. Buddha Prakash : *Rgveda and Indus Valley Civilisation*, p124

4. Penka, Q. R.C. Mujumdar, *The Vedic Age*, p-206

5. R.C. Mujumdar, *The Vedic Age*, p-205

Some scholars place the original home of the Indo-European in central and eastern Europe. H. Schmidt locates it on the lower Danube, De Michchi in Hungary and P.Giles in the area which is bounded on its eastern side by the Carpathians, on its south by the Balkans, on its western side by the Austrian and Bohmer wald and on the north by the Erzgebirge and the mountains, which links them up with the carpathians, that is, the country now called Hungary, Austria and Bohemia.<sup>6</sup>

The problem of the origin of the Indo-Europeans is also discussed by Italian scholars from the standpoint of the history of their country.

A group of scholars considers South Russia as the original home of the Indo-Europeans. Schraders, Myres, Cornoy, Burrow etc. follow this view and *peake and childe see in the ochre sepulchres* of the Russian steppes the traces of the movements of the Indo-European peoples.<sup>7</sup>

Another group of scholars seeks the home of the Indo-Europeans in Asia Minor. Suggesting this view, Feist has shown that the Germans were originally a non-Indo-European people speaking a *non-Indo-European* language. It was later that adopted and assimilated the Indo-European language as a result of diverse influences.<sup>8</sup>

But, these theories too have suffered of the same fate which the previous theories had. In fact the problem of the location of the original homeland of the Aryans is still unsolved.

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6. P.Giles, *The Aryans*, *Cambridge History of India*, Vol.I, P.61; *Indo-Europeans*, *Encyclopaedia Britanica*, Vol. II.XII. p.266

7. O. Schrader, *Reallexicon der indogermanische Sprache* (1901); T. Burru : *The Sanskrit Language* p-30; A Cornoy, *Les Indo-Europeans* (Louvain 1921)

8. Sigmund Feist : *La Question du pays d'Original des Indo-Europeans*, *Scientia* (1913), pp-304-313

### **Theory of Arctic Region :**

The famous Maharashtrian scholar Bal Gangadhar Tilak in his book '*Arctic home in the Vedas*'<sup>9</sup> has tried to prove that the Arctic region or North pole region was original homeland of the Aryans. His view is that the description of the natural phenomenon in *Rgveda* tallies with that of the region of North-Pole. There are references in *Rgveda* that in the original homeland of the Aryans severe cold, longer dusks and six months day and night were the common features. These considerations support the view that the early Aryans were the inhabitants of North pole and from there they migrated to Europe, Central Asia and India. But this theory of Tilak has not found favour of the scholars as it is based on the science of the Astronomy.

### **The Theory of Tibet as the Original Homeland :**

In his book '*Satyartha Prakash*' Swami Dayanand maintains that Aryans were the inhabitants of Tibet. F.E. Pargiter, in his book '*Ancient Indian Historical Traditions*' has also supported the theory of Swami Dayanand. But this view is also not accepted by the scholars.

### **The theory of India (Sapta-sindhu region) as original home of Aryans :**

In the last century the Bangali historian Dr. A.C. Das in his book '*Rgvedic India*'<sup>10</sup> has tried to prove that the Aryans did not come to India from outside, rather they were the inhabitants of India. The *Rgveda*, which throws sufficient light on the customs and culture of Aryans, gives no indication that the Aryans came to India from

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9. See B.G. Tilak, *The Arctic Home in the Vedas*, pp.58-60, 160

10. See A.C. Das, *Rgvedic India*. 2nd ed., p.71

outside. According to *Rgveda* the Aryans dwelt in the region of *Saptasindhu*, which comprised modern Punjab, Kashmir, Kabul and Gandhara. This region stretched from the river Sindhu to the river Saraswati. Later on, they spread to other parts of India. In *Purāṇas*, there is the description of *Devāsura* (God-demons) war and *Devas* defeated the Asuras. *Zenda-Āvestā*, the religious book of the Iranians also records the same type of war. From these references we can deduce the inference that was most probably among the Aryans and Iranians in which the Iranians were defeated and driven away.

## 2. Ārya and Dasyu : Historical connotation

In the *R̥gveda Samhitā*, the word *ārya* with its many declensional forms occurs thirty-six times, thirteen times with *dāsa*<sup>1</sup>, nine times with *dasyu*<sup>2</sup>, thirteen times independently<sup>3</sup> and two times with *dāśīh*<sup>4</sup> (in *R̥v.* IV-103-3 along with *dasyu*). In the *R̥gveda* V- 34.5, Ārya is referred to as leading the *Dāsa* at his will.<sup>5</sup> Veṅkaṭamādhava and Sāyaṇa take *ārya* here to mean *svāmī*.<sup>6</sup> Here according to them, *ārya* is an attribute of Indra. In the *R̥gveda* X.86.19, Indra is mentioned as going everywhere distinguishing the *Dāsa* and the *Ārya*<sup>7</sup>. In the *R̥gveda* X.138.2, *Sūrya* is said to have unyoked his chariot in the mid-way of heaven when Indra, the *Ārya*, found himself a match to *Dāsa*.<sup>8</sup> Griffith finds here, a reference to a detention of the Sun to enable the Āryan to complete the overthrow of their enemies.<sup>9</sup> (In mantras referred to above Ārya and Dāsa are depicted as opposite ones, and the former is described as winning over the latter).

In nine mantras of the *R̥gveda*, *Ārya* and *Dasyu* have been mentioned together. the *R̥gveda* VI.51.8 Indra is requested to discern Āryas and Dasyus and made the latter surrender to the former.<sup>10</sup>

1. *R̥v.* V.34.-6; VI.22-10; 33-3; 60-6; VII.83-11, etc.

2. *R̥v.* I.51-8; 103-3; 117-21, etc.

3. *R̥v.* I-130-89; 156-5; IV.26-2; 30-18; VI.33-3, etc.

4. *R̥v.* I.103.3; VI.25-2

5. इन्द्रो विश्वस्य दमिता विभीषणो यथावशं नयति दासमार्यः। *R̥v.* V-34-6

6. Sāyaṇa on *R̥v.* V-34-6

7. अयमेनि विचाकशद्विचिन्वन्दासमार्यम्। *R̥v.* X-86-19

इन्द्रो ब्रवीति। विचाकशत् पश्यन् यजमानान् दासम् उपक्षपयितारमसुरं आर्यम्।

अपि च विचिन्वन् पृथक्कुर्वन् अयम् अहमिन्द्रः एमि यज्ञं प्रति गच्छामि - Sāyaṇa on *R̥v.* X-86-19

इन्द्र आह अयम् गच्छामि विपश्यन् पृथक्कुर्वन् असुरम् आर्यं च। Veṅk, Ibid

8. वि सूर्यो मध्ये अमुचद्रथे दिवो विदद्धासाय प्रतिमानमार्यः। *R̥v.* X-138-3

यदा अभिन्न इन्द्र दासाय उपक्षपिवे वृत्रादये प्रतिमानं प्रतिकृतिं प्रतीकारं विदत् वेति जानाति। Sāyaṇa on *R̥v.* X-138-3

9. Griffith, R.T.H. footnote to *R̥v.* X-138-3

10. वि जानीह्यार्यान् ये च दस्यवो बर्हिष्पते इन्धय शासदव्रतान्। *R̥v.* I-51-8

Here Skandasvāmin takes *āryān* to mean *dasyavah* “as those who do not perform the sacrifices”.<sup>11</sup> Sāyaṇa interprets *Āryan* as “Wise ones the performers of sacrifices” and *dasyavāh* as “hinderers of sacrificers”.<sup>12</sup> In the *Rgveda* 1.103.3, there is a reference to shattering of the forts of Dāsas by Indra. Indra is prayed for casting his dart at the *Dasyu* and increasing the Āryas’ might and glory.<sup>13</sup> Skandasvāmin takes *dasyu* to mean *anārya* i.e., ‘who is not an Ārya’.<sup>14</sup> This according to Skandasvāmin *Anārya* is opposite to *Ārya*, though this word nowhere occurs in the *Rgveda*, Sāyaṇa, here too, takes *āryāḥ* to mean ‘wise ones’, the eulogisers’.

In the *Rgveda* II.11.19, there is a reference to the Ārya subduing the Dasyus.<sup>15</sup> Here Sāyaṇa understands *āryeṇa* to mean *āryabhāvena*. In the *Rgveda* III.34.9, there is an explicit mention of *ārya varṇa*. Indra is said to have protected the *Ārya Varṇa* after having smitten the Dasyus. How did Indra protect the *Ārya Varṇa* having smitten the Dasyus? The seer says, Indra gained possession of the horses, the Sun, the cows the feeder of many, the gold and all the enjoyments and giving these to Ārya protected the *Ārya Varṇa*.<sup>16</sup> Veṅkaṭamādhava and Sāyaṇa take *ārya varṇa* to mean ‘the noblest

11. वि जानीहि आर्यान् साधुवृत्तान् यागपरानित्यर्थः। ये च दस्यवः देवानां शत्रुवृताः अयागपरास्तान्। यष्टनयष्टंश्च जानीहि। Skandasvāmin *Rv.*I-51-8

12. हे इन्द्र त्वं आर्यान् विदुषः अनुष्ठातृन् वि जानीहि विशेषेण बुल्यस्व।

ये च दस्यवः तेषामनुष्ठातृणानुपक्षपायतारः शत्रवः तानपि विजानीहि। Sāyaṇa on *Rv.*I-51-8

13. स जातूभर्मा श्रद्धधान ओजः पुरो विभिन्दन्नाचरद्दि दासीः। विद्वान् वज्रिन्दस्यवे हेतिमस्यार्य सहो वर्धया द्युम्नमिन्द्र॥ *Rv.*I-103-3

14. दस्युशब्दोऽनार्यवचनः। Skandasvāmin on *Rv.*I-103-3

15. सनेम ये त ऊतिभिस्तरन्तो विश्वाः स्पृध आर्येण दस्यून्। *Rv.*II-11-19

16. ससानात्यौ उत सूर्य ससानेन्द्रः ससान पुरुभोजसं गाम्।

हिरण्यमुत भोगं ससान हत्वी दस्यून् प्रार्य वर्णमावत्। *Rv.*III-34-9

order,' 'the first three *varṇas*.<sup>17</sup> The association of the word *varṇa* with both Ārya and Dāsa<sup>18</sup> may be referred to two classes of people distinct from each other, on the basis of colour or deeds performed by them. Griffith in the footnote explains *ārya varṇa* as "Race of Āryas". In the *Rgveda* VI.18.3 Indra is said to have explained as *ārya varṇa* as "Race of Āryas".<sup>19</sup> In the *Rgveda* VI.25.2, there is a reference to *dasiḥ viśah* who are said to have been subdued by Indra to the Ārya.<sup>20</sup> In the *Rgveda* X.49.3, Indra is said not to have given up Ārya *nāma* to Dasyu.<sup>21</sup> Udgītha takes *āryam nāma* to mean the 'name of Indra, the ruler of all the three regions'.<sup>22</sup> Veṅkaṭamādhava and Sāyaṇa take it to mean 'the water which is for Āryas'.<sup>23</sup> Indra never gives the water to Dasyu, which is for Āryas. Sāyaṇa, optionally, also takes it to mean the 'adorable name'.<sup>24</sup>

In the *Rgveda* I.117.21, the Aśvins are said to have produced far-spreading light for the Ārya blasting away the Dasyu with their trumpet. Here, too by *dasyu* Sakandasvāmin means *ānārya* and Sāyaṇa as *upakṣayakāriṇam*. By *āryāya* Skandasvāmin means for the favour of Ārya, i.e., 'person of good conduct' (*sādhūnāmanugrahārtham*). Sāyaṇa here takes *āryāya* to mean 'for wise one' or for

17. दस्यून् हत्वा त्रैवर्णिकान् प्र आवत् । Veṅkaṭamādhava on *Rv*.III-34-9

दस्यून् बाधकान् असुरान् हत्वा आर्यम् उत्तमं वर्णं त्रैवर्णिकं प्र आवत् । यथा कर्मविघ्नो न भवेत्पालयत् ।

Sāyaṇa on *Rv*.III-34-9

18. यो दासं वर्णमधरं गुहाकः *Rv*.II-12-4

19. त्वं ह नु त्यददमायो दस्यूरैकः कृष्टीरवनोरायाय । *Rv*.VI-18-3

20. अमिर्विश्वा अभियुजो विषूचीरायाय विशोऽवतीरीर्दासीः । *Rv*.VI-25-2

21. अहं शृष्णस्य श्रुतिता वधर्यमं न यो रर आर्यं नाम दस्यहे । *Rv*.X-49-3

22. आर्यं नाम अर्यस्येदम् आर्यम् । अर्यस्य त्रिभुवनेश्वरस्य मम नाम इन्द्र इत्येतत् । Udgītha on *Rv*.X-49-3

23. आर्यं आर्यसम्बन्धि आर्याणां देयमित्यर्थः तादृशं नाम । उदकनामैतत् नामकमुदकं दस्यवे शत्रवे उपक्षपयित्रे न ररे दत्तकमस्मि -आर्याणां देयम् उदकम् असुराय । Sāyaṇa on *Rv*.X-49-3

24. यद्वा । आर्यं पूज्यमित्यसाधारणं नाम शत्रवे न दत्तवान्नास्मि । Sāyaṇa on *Rv*.X-49-3



Manu. In the *Rgveda* II 11.18, Indra is said to have uncovered the light for the Ārya sinking the Dasyu in his left hand.<sup>25</sup> In the *Rgveda* VII 5.6, Agni is said to have dispelled the Dasyus from their place producing great light for the Ārya.<sup>26</sup> Here by *āryāya* Veṅkaṭamādhava means for people' (*ānārya manuṣyāya*) and Sāyaṇa as 'deedful person' (*karmavate-janāya*). In the *Rgveda* X.43.4, Indra is prayed for bestowing *āryam jyotih* to the people.<sup>27</sup> Here, Veṅkaṭamādhava and Sāyaṇa render *āryam* as *preyam* an adjective of light. Udgītha takes *āryam* the 'powers of Indra'.<sup>28</sup> In the *Rgveda* 1, 59.2 Vaiśvānara Agni is said to have been produced by the gods to be verily the light for the Ārya.<sup>29</sup> Here, Sāyaṇa as usual takes *ārya* to mean a scholar, Manu or a sacrificer (*āryāya viduṣe manave yajamānāya vā*). In the *Rgveda* VIII.33.7, there is a reference to three *āryaḥ prajāḥ* having light before them.<sup>30</sup> Here, according to Sāyaṇa, three *āryāḥ prajāḥ* refer to three noble creatures, viz. Vasu, Rudra, and Ādityas.<sup>31</sup>

In the *Rgveda* VI.130.8, Indra is said to have protected in the battlefield the Ārya who offers sacrifices.<sup>32</sup> Here *yajamānatva* 'the performership of the sacrifice' is referred to as a distinctive feature of an Ārya. Veṅkaṭamādhava here takes *āryam* to mean *traivarṇikam*,

25. अपावृणोज्योतिरार्याय नि स्वयतः सादि दस्युरिन्द्रः। *Rv.* II-11-18

26. त्वं दस्यूरोकसो अग्न आज उरुज्योतिर्जनयत्तार्याय। *Rv.* VII-5-6

27. प्रैषामनीकं शवसा दविद्युतद्विदत् स्वर्मनवे ज्योतिरार्यम्। *Rv.* X-43-4

28. आर्यम् आर्यस्य सर्वस्य जगतः स्वामिनः इन्द्रस्य स्वभूतिमिन्द्रत्वं च प्रापयौत्यर्थः।

Udgītha on *Rv.* X-43-4

29. तं त्वा देवासोऽजनयन्त देवं वैश्वानर ज्योतिरिदार्याय। *Rv.* I-59-2

30. त्रयः कृण्वन्ति भुवनेषु रेतस्तिस्त्रः प्रजा आर्या ज्योतिरग्रा। *Rv.* VII-33-7

31. भुवनेषु प्रतिव्यन्तरिक्षद्युषु त्रयः अग्निवायुसूर्याः यथाक्रमेण रेतः विश्वस्य धारकमुदकं कृण्वन्ति कुर्वन्ति।

तेषां त्रयाणां ज्योतिरग्राः आदित्य प्रमुखाः आर्याः श्रेष्ठाः तिस्रः प्रजा भवन्ति।

Sāyaṇa on *Rv.* VII-33-7

32. इन्द्रः समत्सु यजमानमार्यं प्रवद्विष्वेषु शतमूतिराजिषु। *Rv.* I-130-8

i.e., belonging to three classes of people - Brāhmaṇa, Rājanya and Vaiśya. Sāyaṇa explains *āryam* as “approachable by all’ (*āryam araniyam sarvair gantavyam*). In the *Rgveda* 1.156.5, Viṣṇu is said to have given the Ārya, the sacrificer, the share of *Ṛta*.<sup>33</sup> To follow the path of *Ṛta* here referred to is another main characteristic feature of the Ārya. According to Sāyaṇa, Viṣṇu, the dweller of three regions, is said to have made the Ārya pleased and given the fruit of the sacrifice to him.<sup>34</sup> In the *Rgveda* IV.26.2, Indra is reported as himself saying that he has given land to the Ārya, rain and bellowing waters to the sacrificing people.<sup>35</sup>

Here *dāṣuṣe martyāya* seems to be explanation of *āryāya* given by the seer himself. Veṅkaṭamādhava renders *āryāya* to *panditāya* and Sāyaṇa as *Manave*, for Manu.’ In the *Rgveda* VII. 18.17, Indra is said to have brought the cows of the *ārya* for the Tṛtsus killing the enemies in the battle.<sup>36</sup> Veṅkaṭamādhava takes *ārya* here as referring to Turvaśa, and Sāyaṇa as to *karmaśīla*. In the *Rgveda* VIII. 103. 1 Agni is mentioned as the increaser of the Ārya.<sup>37</sup> Here Veṅkaṭamādhava by *āryāya* understands *āryasya varṇasya* and Sāyaṇa as *uttamavarṇasya*. In the *Rgveda* IX.63.5<sup>38</sup> Soma is mentioned as flowing forth making all ‘Ārya’. Veṅkaṭamādhava takes *āryam* to mean *kalyāṇam* and Sāyaṇa as *bhadram*. The phrase *kṛṇvanto viśvam āryam*

33. वेधा अजिन्वत् त्रिषधस्था आर्यमृतस्य भागे यजमानमाभजत् । *Rv.I-156-8*

आर्यम् आगन्तव्यं यजमानम् अजिन्वत् प्रीणयति । .....ऋतस्य यज्ञस्य भागो हुतशेषरूपे तं यजमानम् ।  
*Rv.I-157-2*

34. आभजत् समीपयतीत्यर्थः ।

अहमपो अनयं वावशाना मम देवासो अनुकेतमायन् । *Rv.IV-26-2*

36. आ योऽनयत्सदमा आर्यस्य गव्या तृत्सुभ्यो अजगन् युधा नृन् । *Rv.VIII-18-7*

37. उपो षु जातमार्यस्य वर्धनमग्निं नक्षन्त नो गिरः । *Rv.VIII-103-1*

38. इन्द्रं वर्धन्तो अमुरः कृण्वन्तो विश्वमार्यम् । अपघ्नन्तो अराव्यः । *Rv.IX-63-5*

is most often used to express taking the entire universe Ārya'. In the *Rgveda* X.65,11, Viśvedevāḥ are mentioned as spreading the *āryāvrata* over the land.<sup>39</sup> Udgītha takes *ārya vrata* to mean 'godly deeds', such as Agnihotra, etc.<sup>40</sup> Veṅkaṭamādhava and Sāyaṇa, by *ārya vrata* mean *kalyāṇāni karmāṇi*. Griffith takes it to mean the righteous laws of Aryan. In the *Rgveda* IX 63.14 Soma is mentioned as flowing forth to the dwellings of Āryas with streams of water.<sup>41</sup> In the *Rgveda* X. 11.4, there is an explicit mention of *aryāviśaḥ*. Here it is said that when the Ārya people chose Agni as invoking priest, then the act like performance of sacrifice started.<sup>42</sup> Udgītha and Sāyaṇa take *āryāh* to mean *yajamānāḥ*.

From the above survey of meanings of the word *ārya* as given by the Indian commentators of the *Rgveda* it would be clear that this word conveys assigned various meanings but everywhere it gives a good sense. We may classify these meanings into four groups:-

(i) *svāmi* (V, S) *vidvān* (S), *paṇḍita* (V), *anuṣṭhātā* (S), *sādhu* (Sk) *sādhuvṛtta* (Sk), *yajmāna* (V.S.) *yāgapara* (Sk), *yaṣṭā* (Sk), *stotā* (S), *karmānuṣṭhātr-jana* (S), *karmakṛt-jana* (S), *karmayukta* (S), *karmavat* (S), *karmaśila* (S), *kulīna* (Udg), *abhijna* (Udg), *abhigamanīya* (Udg, S), *araṇīya* (S), *sarvaih gantavya* (S), *agantavya* (S).

(ii) *Manu* (V.S.), *Manuṣya* (V), *tribhuvaneśvara*, *Indra* (Udg).

39. ब्रह्म गामश्चं जनयन्त ओषधीर्वनस्पतीन्पृथिवीं पर्वतां अप ।

सूर्यं दिवि रोहयन्त सुधानव आर्या व्रता विसृजन्तो अधि क्षभि । *Rv.X-65-11*

40. आर्या आर्याणि । आर्याः ईश्वराः साधनवन्तः अधिकृन्मनुष्याः Udgītha on *Rv.X-65-11*

41. एते धामान्यार्या शुक्रा ऋतस्य धारया । वाजं गोमन्तमक्षरन् । *Rv.IX-63-14*

42. यदी विशो वृणते दस्ममार्या अग्निं होतारमध धीरजायत । *Rv.X-11-4*

(iii) *śreṣṭha* (S) *bhadra* (S), *kalyāṇakarma* (V), *prerya* (V. S) *Pujya* (S), *prakāśa* (V).

(iv) *traivarṇika* (V, S), *uttama varṇa* (V, S).

On the other hand the word *dāsa* or *dasyu* has been given opposite meanings to *Ārya*, such as

(i) *anuṣṭāhātṛṇām upakṣapayitā, upakṣayakārī, karmānupa-  
kṣapayitā, bādhaka, śatru, asura, karmahīna-jana, karmavirodhī,  
asadācāra, akulīna*, etc.

(ii) *anārya, śūdra, karmakara* (servant) etc.

On the basis of opposite meanings of the words *ārya* and *dāsa* or *dasyu*, scholars have been led to propound different theories regarding the *Ārya* and the *Dāsas*. Griffith in the footnote to the *Rgveda* 1.51.8, writes, the *Āryas* are, first the people who speak the languages of Veda and *Dāsyus* are the original and huddle people of India. Later, the former are the true and loyal people, faithful to India and the gods, and, the latter are the wicked and godless. This is not the view of Griffith only.

### 3.The River Sarasvatī : Identification based on the R̥gvedic Geography

In the *R̥gveda*, some of *sūktas* are seen exclusively devoted to eulogize Sarasvatī. (*R̥v.* VII-95; VI-61). In its historical notion one can identify Sarasvatī in the *R̥gveda* as a river. It was originally stood for the stage of the R̥gvedic civilization. The mighty streams of the Sarasvatī are described in several places of the *R̥gveda*.<sup>1</sup> It is also considered as divine for the sacredness of its waters. In the post-Vedic period it is regarded as the personified form of the goddess of speech (*Vāk-devī*), learning and eloquence. At first, the Vedic seers rendered the river Sarasvatī to be goddess and later on projected their concepts into a significant and physical form. This concept of Sarasvatī as a river-goddess is also endorsed by Yāska.<sup>2</sup>

There were many rivers in the country of the R̥gvedic Aryans, but the Sarasvatī was best among them.<sup>3</sup> The seers dwelling along its banks, might have been immensely impressed by its mighty stream, rhythmic flow, congenial waters and the like. This might have evoked much praise for it. It was, probably, for such reasons that the Sarasvatī occupied, a very pious phase even in the sacrifices. In the context of sacrifices this river was regarded as mother and subsequently as a goddess. Godhood ascribed to it is on *par* with the Gaṅgā, which is regarded as a mother-goddess (*Gaṅgā-māta*), in later literature.

1. *R̥v.* I-3-12; II-41-16; III-23-4 ; V-42-12; VII-36-6 ; 96-1-2; VIII-21-17,18; 54-4; X-17-7 ; 64-9; 75-5; etc.

2. तत्र सरस्वत्येकस्य नदीवद् देवतावाक् च निम्न भवन्ति । Yāska, *Nirukta*, II-23

3. *R̥v.* II-41-16

### The Description of Sarasvatī in the Ṛgveda :

In the *Ṛgveda*, Sarasvatī has been described both as a river and as a river-goddess. So far her anthropomorphic feature in the *Ṛgveda* is concerned, this is possible only in its capacity of river rather than of a goddess. Also her anthropomorphism has been virtually carried out in the epics and the *Purāṇas*.

Of course, the *Ṛgveda* does not describe in clear terms the various parts such as hands, mouth, legs, eyes, breasts etc. These descriptions are found in the post-Vedic literature. But the ascription of limbs had begun even in the time of the *Ṛgveda*. The waves (*ūrmayaḥ*) of the Sarasvatī river are poetically conceived as its hands. It digs up its banks with its waves as a man digs up lotus-roots (*bisakha-iva*). With its hands of waves it is described as tearing down the peaks of mountains.<sup>4</sup>

There are some *mantras* in the *Ṛgveda*, describing the beauty of Sarasvatī, which is implied by the terms like, *Saumyā*,<sup>5</sup> *Śubhrā*,<sup>6</sup> *Supeśas*<sup>7</sup> etc.

There are Vedic terms, which speak of the mental status of Sarasvatī. Of them '*dhiyāvasuḥ*'<sup>8</sup> '*codayitrī sunṛtānam*'<sup>9</sup> and '*cetantī sumatīnām*'<sup>10</sup> deserve special attention.

In the *Ṛgveda*, special aspects of Sarasvatī are described she is delineated as a mother, sister, wife, daughter and friend.

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4. *Rv.* VI-61-2

5. *Rv.* IX-81-4

6. *Rv.* V-42-12

7. *Rv.* IX-5-8

8. *Rv.* I-3-10

9. *Ibid*

10. *Rv.* I-3-11

As such the words presenting Sarasvatī as a mother are :  
'sindhu-mātā,<sup>11</sup> 'ambitamā<sup>12</sup> and 'mātā.<sup>13</sup>

So also, some epithets present Sarasvatī as a sister :  
'saptasvasā<sup>14</sup> 'saptadhātuh<sup>15</sup> 'saptathī<sup>16</sup> triṣadhasthā,<sup>17</sup> and 'svsṛr  
anyā ṛtāvarī.<sup>18</sup>

The aspect of Sarasvatī as a wife is brought out by the  
following epithets : 'vīraptñī<sup>19</sup> 'vṛṣṇah patñī,<sup>20</sup> and 'marutva<sup>ī</sup>.<sup>21</sup>

The aspect of Sarasvatī as a daughter is also not worked out  
in detail in the *Ṛgveda*. But it is implied by the epithet *pāvīravī*.<sup>22</sup>

There are a few attributes such as 'marutsakhā,<sup>23</sup> 'sakhya<sup>ā</sup>,<sup>24</sup>  
and 'uttara sakhibhyaḥ,<sup>25</sup> which present Sarasvatī as a friend.

Various functions of Sarasvatī have been described in the  
*Ṛgveda*. The wealth has been one of the foremost of these  
functions. The following attributes of Sarasvatī as the giver of  
wealth : 'ratnadhā, śaśayaḥ<sup>26</sup>, 'vasuvid', 'rāyas cetantī.<sup>27</sup>

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11. *Ṛv.* VII-36-6
  12. *Ṛv.* II-41-16
  13. *Ṛv.* X-64-9
  14. *Ṛv.* VI-61-10
  15. *Ṛv.* VI-61-12
  16. *Ṛv.* VII-36-6
  17. *Ṛv.* VI-61-12
  18. *Ṛv.* VI-61-9
  19. *Ṛv.* VI-49-7
  20. *Ṛv.* V-42-12
  21. *Ṛv.* II-30-8
  22. *Ṛv.* VI-49-7; X-65-13
  23. *Ṛv.* VII-96-2
  24. *Ṛv.* VI-61-14
  25. *Ṛv.* VII-95-4
  26. *Ṛv.* I-164-49
  27. *Ṛv.* VII-95-2

The words 'Mayobhūḥ' or in pheral 'mayobhuraḥ'<sup>28</sup> speak of her as the giver of pleasure.

The Ṛgvedic people desired brave progeny, and like other deities, Sarasvatī was also prayed therefore. *Sinīvālī* is the presiding deity of fertility and growth. She is, thus, the goddess bestowing progeny.<sup>29</sup>

Among many things granted by Sarasvatī, food is very important and prominent gift. The epithets 'Vājinīvatī'<sup>30</sup> and 'Vājinī'<sup>31</sup> speak of her as granting food.

The following terms bring to light some of the special features of the personality of Sarasvatī : *Pāvakā*<sup>32</sup>, *Ghṛtaci*<sup>33</sup>, *Pārāvatāghnī*<sup>34</sup>, *Citrāyuh*<sup>35</sup>, *Hiraṇyavartini*<sup>36</sup>, *Asuryā*<sup>37</sup>, *Dharuṇamayāsi Pūḥ*<sup>38</sup>, *Akavārī*.<sup>39</sup>

It is beyond doubt true that Sarasvatī, in the *Ṛgveda*, has been described both as a river and as a river-goddess. So far as her anthropomorphic feature in the *Ṛgveda* is concerned, this is possible only in its capacity of a river rather than of a goddess. Her anthropomorphism has been virtually carried out in the epics and the *Purāṇas*.

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28. *Rv.* I-13-9

29. *Rv.* I-164-49

30. *Rv.* I-3-10; VI-61-4 ; VII-96-3

31. *Rv.* V-61-6

32. *Rv.* I-3-10

33. *Rv.* I-2-7; 167-3 ; III-6-1; 19-2; 30-7; IV 6-3, etc

34. *Rv.* VI-61-2

35. *Rv.* VI-49-7

36. *Rv.* VI-61-7

37. *Rv.* VII-96-1

38. *Rv.* VII-95-1

39. *Rv.* VII-95-3



### The Geographical Descriptions of the River Sarasvatī:

The *R̥gveda* contains various references of Sarasvatī as a river. The *Nadīstuti* hymn in the *R̥gveda*, mentions a set of rivers, from the Gaṅga in the east and Sindhu in the west.<sup>40</sup> Here, Sarasvatī is mentioned between the Yamunā and the Śutudri (Sutlej).

Another important information that the *R̥gveda* describes it as flowing from the mountains and reaching the sea. The *R̥gveda* says-

“Purest amongst all the rivers and vibrant, the Sarasvatī moves on from the mountains to the ocean; manifesting immense riches of the world, She has provided milk and ghee to Nahuṣa.”<sup>41</sup>

It is clear that the *R̥gvedic* Sarasvatī was a mighty river, originating in the mountains and flowing all the way down to the ocean.

The geographical fact that the Sarasvatī was indeed mighty rivers and it is described by many other *mantras* in the *R̥gveda*. eg.,

“This (Sarasvatī river) has shattered the mountain peaks with her fast and powerful waves, just (as easily) as one uproots the lotus-steam; let us invoke her, who strikes what is far and near, with holy hymns and prayers.”<sup>42</sup>

“Whose (i.e of the Sarasvatī) boundless, impetuous and swift-moving flood gushes forth with a tempestuous roar.”<sup>43</sup>

40. *R̥v.* X-75 5,6

41. एकाचेत्सरस्वती नदीनां शुचिर्यती गिरिभ्यः आ समुद्रात् ।  
रायश्चेतन्ती भुवनस्य भूरेर्धृतं पयो दुदुहे नाहुषाय ॥ *R̥v.* VII-95-2

42. इयं शुष्मेभिर्बिसखा इवारुजत्सानु गिरिणां तविषेभिरूर्मिभिः ।  
पारावताग्नीममसे सुवृक्तिभिः सरस्वतीमा विवासेम धीतिभिः ॥ *R̥v.* VI-61-2

43. यस्य अनन्तो आहुतस्त्वेषश्वरिष्णुरर्णवः । अमश्चरति रोरुवत् ॥ *R̥v.* VI-61-8

She was also fed by many tributaries, as indicated by the epithets as ‘*Saptasvasā*’ (having seven sisters or having one of the seven sisters). It states- “To us the dearest amongst the dear ones, seven-sistered, (the Sarasvatī) has earned our hymns of praise.”<sup>44</sup>

These seven sisters (rivers) were difficult to determine. But, the Dr̥ṣadvatī and Āpayā have been two of them, as mentioned in a Ṛgvedic *mantra*.

“O Agni, I have established you at the best place on the earth, in the dwelling of Iḷā on this most auspicious days; may you shine brilliantly amongst the descendants of Manu, on the banks of the Dr̥ṣadvatī, Āpayā, and Sarasvatī.”<sup>45</sup>

The Ṛgvedic Aryans regarded her, as a heavenly diety. Many of the Ṛgvedic *mantras* have indicated this. For example:

“May the venerable Sarasvatī come to our sacrifice from the heavens and high mountains; may she, filled with ghee, accept our oblations and listen to our devotional hymns.”<sup>46</sup>

“O Sarasvatī, the best of mothers, the best of rivers, the best of goddesses, we are unknown insignificant, please favour us with fame, O mother.”<sup>47</sup>

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44. उत नः प्रिया प्रियासु सप्तस्वसा सुजुष्टा । सरस्वती स्तोम्या भूत् ॥ *Rv.* VI-61-10

45. नि त्वा दधे वर आ पृश्निव्या इळायास्पदे सुदिनत्वे अह्वाम् ।

दृषद्वत्यां मनुष आपयायां सरस्वत्यां रेवदग्ने दिदीहि । *Rv.* III-23-4

46. आ नो दिवो बृहतः पर्वतादा सरस्वती यजता गन्तु यज्ञम् ।

हवं देवी जुजुषाणा घृताची शग्मं नो वाचमुशती शृणोतु ॥ *Rv.* V-43-11

47. अम्बीतमे नदीतमे देवितमे सरस्वती ।

अप्रज्ञस्ता इव स्मसी प्रज्ञस्तिमम्ब नस्कृधि ॥ *Rv.* II-41-16

It is clear that she has been regarded as the best of mothers (*ambitame*), as the best of the rivers (*nadītame*) and as the most respectable diety (*devitame*).

From the concept of a river regarded as deity, she was mentioned alongside other deities. This is clear from a Ṛgvedic *mantra*. “O gods-Agni, Indra, Varuṇa, Mitra, Maruts, and Viṣṇu, give us strength; o the two Nāsatyas, Rudra, the divine females, Puṣan, Bhaga, Sarasvatī, be pleased.”<sup>48</sup>

### Historical Facts :

The location of Sarasvatī can also be ascertained on the basis of historical evidences furnished by the *Ṛgveda*. The *Ṛgveda* refers to many kings residing along the banks of the Sarasvatī. A *mantra* states :

“Along the Sarasvatī, Citra indeed is the king, whereas others are only petty rules; just as Parjanya gives plenty of rain, so has he (Citra) given a thousand, nay a myriad, gifts.”<sup>49</sup>

The *Ṛgveda*, also mentions five tribes as brought up by the Sarasvatī.<sup>50</sup> The dwelling of the Purus by the banks of the Sarasvatī is also referred to in the *Ṛgveda* itself.<sup>51</sup>

According to *Ṛgveda*, this river was associated with king Nahuṣa.<sup>52</sup> Another *mantra* says that the Sarasvatī gave the famous Vedic king Divodāsa, and Vṛdhrayaśva.<sup>53</sup>

48. अग्न इन्द्र वरुण मित्र देवाः शर्धः प्र यन्तु मारुतोत विष्णो ।

उभा नासत्या रुद्रो अध ग्नाः पूषा भगः सरस्वती जुषन्त ॥ *Rv.* V-46-2

49. चित्र इद्राजा राजका इदन्यके यके सरस्वतीमनु ।

पर्जन्य इव ततनद्धि वृष्ट्या सहस्रमयुता ददत् ॥ *Rv.* VIII-21-18

50. त्रिषधस्था सप्तधातु पञ्च जाता वर्धयन्ती ॥ *Rv.* VI-61-12

*Rv.* VII-95-2 ; VII-96-2; VIII-21-18 etc.

51. उभे यत्ते महिना शुभ्रे अन्धसी अधिक्षीयन्ति पूरवः । *Rv.* VII-96-2

52. *Rv.* VII-95-2

53. *Rv.* VI-61-1

All these allusions to the kings and tribes tell us of the antiquity of the Sarasvatī and their close relation with it.

### **The Identification and Location of the Sarasvatī : A Modern Approach**

The Ṛgvedic mighty river Sarasvatī could not maintain its flow and it disappeared long ago. This has attracted attention of the scholars and several of them investigated the whereabouts of the river Sarasvatī. This is a controversial subject of the modern scholars and historians.

Roth identifies the Ṛgvedic Sarasvatī with the Indus river. The Vedic Index states - "Roth, held that another river, the Sindhu (Indus), was really meant only this could it be explained why the Sarasvatī is called 'the foremost of rivers (*naditame*), is said to go to the ocean, and is referred to as a large river, on the banks of which many kings, and indeed, the fire tribes, were located. This view is accepted by Zimmer and others."<sup>54</sup>

Roth's view has no standing, because the Sarasvatī and Sindhu rivers are mentioned in the *Ṛgveda* as independent rivers, and of them, Sarasvatī is highly eulogised. The *Ṛgveda* uses the word 'Sindhu' more often for mere stream but the word appears to have been used for the Sindhu river also.<sup>55</sup> The case of Sarasvatī has been different in that as it has been called "*Sindhumāta*" (the mother of Streams),<sup>56</sup> This epithet which apparently described it as even greater than the Sindhu. If the word 'Sindhu' denotes the Sindhu river, it should be accepted

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54. Macdonel and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.II, p.435

55. *Ṛv.* I-122-6 ; 126-1; IV-54-6; V-53-9 etc.

56. आ यत्साकं यशसो वावशानाः सरस्वती सप्तथी सिन्धुमाता ।। *Ṛv.* VII-36-6

the Sarasvatī as the greater river on account of its being treated as its mother.

According to Max Muller, the Vedic Sarasvatī is the modern Sarsūti. He says "In the enumeration of rivers (evidently from east to west) in Ṛv. X-75-5, Gaṅgā, Yamunā, Sarasvatī, Śutudri, the Sarasvatī comes between the Jamna and Sutlej, the position of the modern Sarsūti (Sarasvatī), which flowing to the west of Thanesar, is joined in Patiala territory by a more westerly stream, the ghaggar, and passing Sirsa, is lost in the desert at Bhatnair; but a dry river bed (Hakra or Ghaggar) can be traced from that point to the Indus."<sup>57</sup>

A.C. Das writes that 'the Sarasvatī, however, never flowed into Indus, but directly into the sea, like the Indus. It was an independent river, and the marks of the old bed, still discernible in the sands, do not point to its conjunction with the Indus.'<sup>58</sup>

The Ṛgvedic culture has been interpreted by most western scholars and many of their Indian followers. Thus, holding on to the notion of a west-to-east movement, these scholars believe that if there is anything common between the Avestā, which is an ancient Iranian text, and the *Ṛgveda*, which lay further east in India, it is the Avestan evidence that must take precedence over the Ṛgvedic.

Rajesh Cochar writes - 'we have argued that the Ghaggar system was already defunct in the Ṛgvedic times and that otherwise also it does not fit in the Ṛgvedic description. We must

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57. Macdonel and Keith, *Vedic Index*, Vol.II, p-435 fn.16

58. A.C. Das, *Rgvedic India*, Calcutta, 1927, p-7 fn.1

therefore look to the west of the Indus to locate the *nadītamā* Sarasvatī. For clue, we once again turn to the Avestā. The Avestan Harahvaiti, phonetically the same as Sarasvatī, was known to Greeks as *Etymander* and is now called Arghandab. Vedic Sarasvatī, however, is to be equated not with the Arghandab but with the Helmand, of which the Arghandab is the main tributary.”<sup>59</sup>

Another Indian historian and archaeologist R.S. Sharma writes - ‘The Sarasvatī receives much attention in the *Ṛgveda* and several *Sūktas* are devoted to it; so they want to use it for their purpose. But it seems that there are several Sarasvatīs, and the earliest Sarasvatī cannot be identified with the Hakra and the Ghaggar. In the *Ṛgveda* the Sarasvatī is called the best of the rivers (*nadītamā*). It seems to have been a great river with perennial water. The Hakra and the Ghaggar cannot much it. The earliest Sarasvatī is considered identical with the Helmand in Afghanistan which is called Harakhwatī in the Avestā.”<sup>60</sup>

He still goes on - “In any case the linguistic and time-place proximity of the Avestā to the *Ṛgveda* leaves no doubt that the early Vedic Sarasvatī is the same as the Harakhwatī or the Helmand. As the Vedic people expanded they took the name Sarasvatī to Punjab, Hariyana and Rajasthan and also to Garhwal, Prayaga and Rajgir.”<sup>61</sup>

These different views of the scholars are untenable. B.B. Lal, has rejected this view on the basis of the *Ṛgvedic* descriptions. In this context, his words may be quoted:

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59. Rajesh Cochar : *The Vedic People*, p-129

60. R.S. Sharma : *Advent of the Aryans in India*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, 1999  
p-35

61. Ibid.

In the first place, the Ṛgvedic Sarasvatī lay between the Yamunā on the one hand and the Sutlej on the other.<sup>62</sup> As mentioned in the *nadīstuti* hymn of the *Ṛgveda*, the names are mentioned serially in that text, from the Gaṅgā in the east to the Indus in the west, and this should leave no doubt in the mind of anyone about the geographical location of the Ṛgvedic Sarasvatī.<sup>63</sup> It shows that there is no Yamunā or Sutlej in Afghanistan.

Secondly, the *Ṛgveda* mentions Dr̥ṣadvati and Āpayā as the tributaries of the Sarasvatī.<sup>64</sup> These two rivers are in Harayana (India) and not in Afghanistan.

Thirdly, the Ṛgvedic Sarasvatī stated to have originated in the mountains and debauched in the ocean.<sup>65</sup> The Helmand of Afghanistan does not at all meet this requirement. It is far away from the ocean.

Fourthly, besides the geographical factors mentioned above, there are some others, which call for attention. For example the *Ṛgveda* refers to a king Citra as having lived on the bank of the Sarasvatī. Likewise, according to *Ṛgveda*, this river was associated with king Nahuṣa<sup>66</sup> and she gave Divodāsa, the famous Vedic king, to Vṛdhraśva.<sup>67</sup> Again, the *Ṛgveda* shows that five specific 'peoples' lived in the Sarasvatī valley,<sup>68</sup> of whom one has clearly been stated to have been the Pūrus, in the *Ṛgveda*.<sup>69</sup>

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62. *Rv.* X-75-5

63. B.B. Lal : *The Saraswati Flows on*, Aryan Books International, New Delhi, 2002, pp-9-10

64. *Rv.* III-23-4

65. *Rv.* VII-95-2

66. *Rv.* VII-95-2

67. *Rv.* VI-61-1

68. *Rv.* VI-96-2

69. *Rv.* VI-96-2

These kings are mentioned in the *R̥gveda*, and they were associated with the Sarasvatī, and it is not in the Avesta. It is clear that the R̥gvedic Sarasvatī is not identical with the Harakhvati of Avesta, which flows in Afghanistan.

Another view-point of the some western and Indian scholars are inclined to apply Sarasvatī to the Indus. But this identification cannot be acceptable.

The river Sarasvatī is described in the seventh *maṇḍala* of the *R̥gveda*, as flowing rapidly with all sustaining waters, sweeping away in its might, all other waters and flowing through the mountains up to the ocean distributing riches to the vast world.<sup>70</sup> As the description in the former mantra does not agree with the little stream taken as the river Sarasvatī,<sup>71</sup> scholars are inclined to apply it to the Indus.

While dealing with the another *mantra*,<sup>72</sup> Griffith, in his translation of *R̥gveda*, observes as below :

She : Sarasvatī as a river. The description given in the text can hardly apply to the small stream generally known under that name ; and from this and other passages which will be noticed as they this and other passages which will be noticed as they occur it seems probable that Sarasvatī is also another name Sindhu or the Indus."<sup>73</sup>

Griffith's this reference has been followed by western scholars and some Indian ones too uphold this view. Two Indian ones too

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70. *R̥v.* VI-95-2

71. A.A. Macdonell, *The Vedic Mythology*, Varanasi, 1963, p-86

72. *R̥v.* VI-61-2

73. Griffith, *The Hymns of the R̥gveda*, Vol.I, Low Price Publications, Delhi, 1995, p-631, Foot note



uphold this view. Ifran Habib and Faiz Habib, state that there were three Sarasvatīs, the first one being the Helmand of Afghanistan, the second the Indus and the third the present-day Sarasvatī running through Haryana, Rajasthan etc.

Arguing their case for the Sarasvatī being the Helmand of Afghanistan the Habibs state :

“But it seems likely ..... that Sarasvatī / Harakhvati was the name for the Helmand, above its junction with Arghandab. Otherwise it is difficult to understand how Sarasvati could be put between Sindhu and Sarayū, i.e. the Indus and Harirud, as major intervening river in *Rv.* X-64.9”<sup>74</sup>

These scholars have followed Griffith’s translation of the *mantra*. Which runs as follows :

“Let the great stream come hither with their mighty help, Sindhu, Sarasvatī and Sarayū with waves.”<sup>75</sup>

Actually, the *R̥gvedic mantra* does not put the Sarasvatī between the other two rivers. It reads “ सरस्वती सरयुः सिन्धुरूमिभिर्महो महीरवसा यन्तु वक्षणीः। (*Rv.* X-64-9.)

So, observation of the scholars mentioned above has totally confessed.

### **The Correct Identification of River Sarasvatī :**

Above mentioned discussion has concluded that the Helmand of the Afghanistan cannot be taken to be the *R̥gvedic Sarasvatī*. The fact that the Indus also cannot be identified with that the

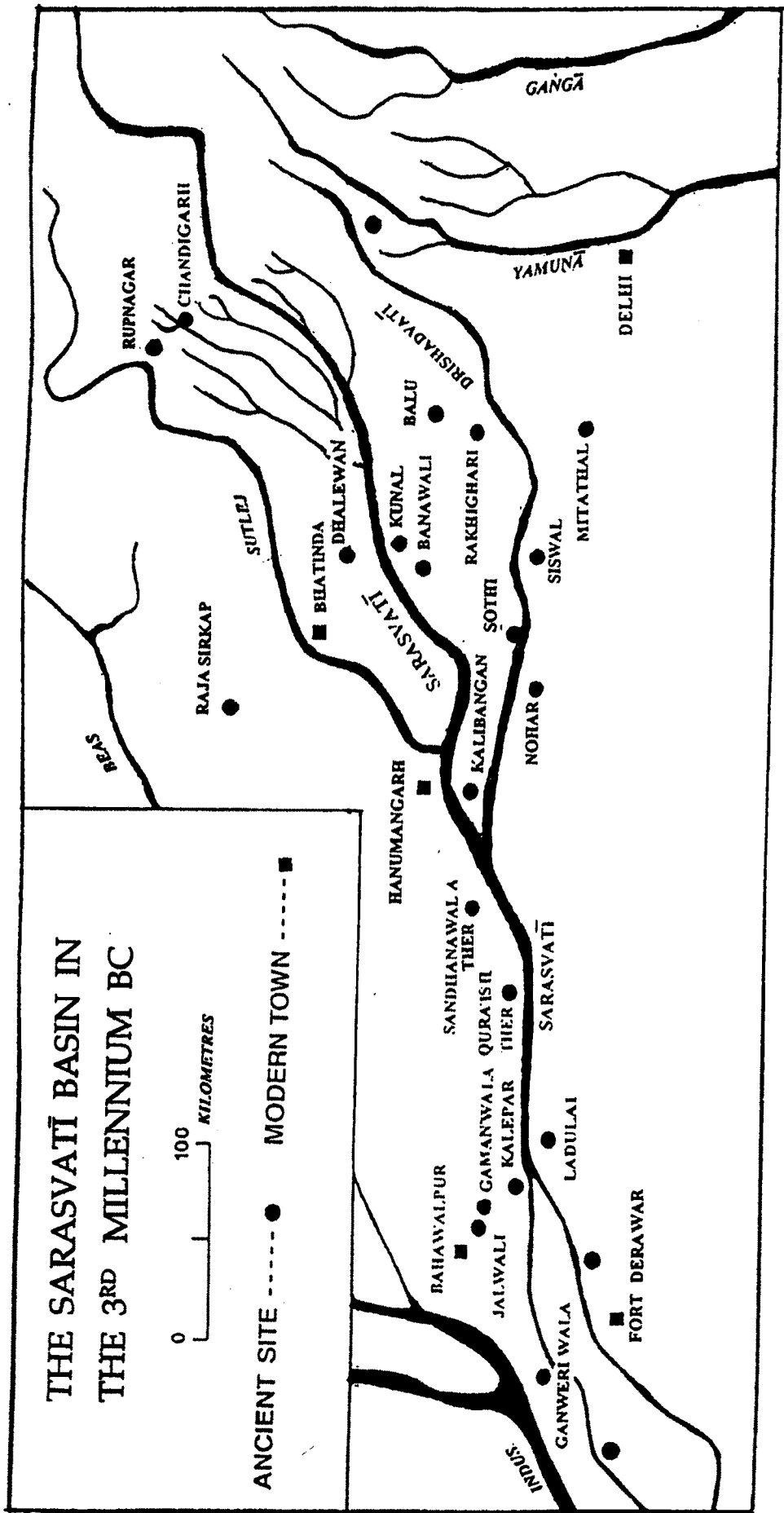
74. Ifran Habib and Fiaz Habib , *The Historical Geography of India, 1800-800 B.C.*, Proceeding Indian History Congress, 52 session, 1991-92, p-76

75. Griffith , *The Hymns of the R̥gveda*, Vol.2, as Tr. on *Rv.* X-64-9

Vedic Sarasvatī. It is clearly shown by the Ṛgvedic evidence itself. In this connection B.B. Lal observes:

In first place, as the *Ṛgveda* says (*Ṛv.X - 75-5*), the Sarasvatī lays between the Yamunā and the Śutudri. Today there is a river called the Sarasvatī which runs between the just mentioned two rivers and thus fulfill the first condition. It originates at the foot of the Siwalik hills and flows southwestwards in Haryana where it passes by the towns of Popli, Kurukshetra and Pehowa, after which it joins the Ghaggar. This combined stream proceeds further down but dries up near Sirsa. Thereafter only its dry bed can be identified. It continues further southwestwards and is called the Ghaggar in northern Rajasthan. Further down, it goes by the name of Hakra in the Cholistan region of Pakistan. Thereafter it turns southwards and in Sindh its branches are variously called the Raini, Wahinda and Nara. Finally, as the available evidence suggests, it fell into the Rann of Kachch.

Secondly, the *Ṛgveda* (*III - 23-4*) mentions the Dṛṣadvatī as being one of the tributaries of the Sarasvatī. And this is precisely so in the case of the Sarasvatī - Ghaggar combine. The Dṛṣadvatī, which also now is dried like the Sarasvatī, has been identified with the modern Chauntang, passing by the towns of Bhadra, Nohar etc. It joins the Sarasvatī - Ghaggar combine near Suratgarh. These, presentday Sarasvatī Ghaggar fulfils the second criterion also.



The feature referred to the *Rgveda* (VII - 95-2) , is that the Sarasvatī originated in the mountains and went all the way to the sea. That is the present day Sarasvatī Ghaggar combine finally joined the sea.

The origin of the Vedic Sarasvatī from the glaciers in the Himālays, which made it a perennial river on its own, and its veing joined by the Sutlej from the north-west, indeed made it a formidable river. This is clearly indicated by its bed, though now dried, which was as much as 6-8 kilometres in width for quite some part of its length. And it is is reflected in the *Rgveda*.

#### **Vināśana (the Disappearance) of the Sarasvatī :**

The *Rgveda* clearly mentions that the Sarasvatī had flowed down from the mountains and joined the ocean. But this mighty river could not maintain its flow and it disappeared long ago. Present day this river is dried up owing to geological changes. The place where it lost its existence, aptly called *Vināśana* or ‘ the disappearance ‘ of the Sarasvatī. Its disappearance has also been connected with the place Plākṣa Prāsravaṇa (Sarasvatī's source). Macdonell and Keith observed - ‘In the *Rgveda Sūtras* the locality is called Plākṣa Prāsravaṇa, and it apparently meant to designate the source of the Sarasvatī rather than the place of its reappearance.’<sup>76</sup>

The *Pancaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa* specifies the distance between *Vināśana* and the Plākṣa Prāsravaṇa. According to the *Pancaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*, the Plākṣa Prāsravaṇa is at the distance of forty four *aśvinas* from *Vināśana*.<sup>77</sup>

76. Macdonell and Keith , *Vedic Index*, Vol.II, p-55

77. चतुश्चत्वारिंशदश्विनानि सरस्वत्या विनाशनात् प्लाक्षः प्रास्त्रवणस्त्वाद् इतः स्वर्गो लोकः सरस्वती सम्मितेनाद्धाना स्वर्गं लोकम् यान्ति । *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*, XXV 10.16

Sāyaṇa explains ‘*Āśvina*’ as : एकोश्च एकेनहोतात्रेण यावन्तम् अध्वानम् गच्छति तावत् एकाश्विनाः ।

The *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa* mentions the distance as forty four *aśvinas* which denotes the distance covered by a horseman in one day. But *aśvina* has not been accepted unanimously to be a specific measurement of length, but has been defined variously. In the *Atharvaveda*, the *aśvina* distance is held to exceed five *Yojanas*.<sup>78</sup>

According to Patanjali, an average horse goes four *Yojanas*, while the superior one, eight *Yojanas* in a day.<sup>79</sup> On the other hand, Kautilya mentions three varieties of horses, of which the horse of the first variety travels the distance of six *Yojanas* in a day, that of the second variety, nine, and that of third, twelve.<sup>80</sup>

There is divergence of opinion as to the actual distance of *Yojanas*. Generally one *Yojanas* is believed to be of eight *Krośas* and one *Krośa* of two miles. It cannot easy to decide the correct distance between *Plākṣa Prāsraraṇa* and *Vināśana*.

In the *Mahābhārata*, *Vināśana* is placed on the borders of the Śudras and the Ābhiras. The land of the Śudras is the place below the confluence of the Cenab and the Indus. *Vināśana* is beyond the borders of these tow places.<sup>81</sup>

According to Manu "the *Sarasvatī* had ceased to reach the sea by that time by disappearing at a place called '*Vināśana*'".<sup>82</sup>

78. यद् धावसी त्रियोयनम् पञ्चयोजनाम् अश्विनाम् । *Atharvaveda*, VI-131-3

79. अश्वोऽयम् यश्चत्वारि योजनानि गच्छति, अश्वतरोयम् योऽष्टै योजनानि गच्छति । *Mahābhāṣya*, V-3-55

80. *Arthaśāstra*, II-30

81. Q. Raychaudhari H.C., *The Sarasvatī*, SC 8(12) July 1942 June 1943 Nos. 1-2, p-473

82. हिमद्विन्दयोर्मध्यं यत्प्राग्विनाशनादपि ।

प्रत्यगेव प्रयागश्च मध्यदेशः प्रकीर्तितः ।

आसमुद्रात्तु वै पूर्वदासमुद्रात्तु पश्चिमात् ।

तयोरेवान्तरं गिर्योरार्यावर्ता विदुर्बुधाः ।। *Manusmṛiti*, II 21-22

In the *Bhaudhāyana Dharmasūtras*, the region of Vināśana is mentioned as existing to the west of Āryāvarta which is to the west of the black-forest, to the north of the Pāripātra and to the south of the Himalayas.<sup>83</sup>

In the later literature, Vināśana is held to exist near modern Sirsa in Kurukṣetra in the eastern Punjab (now in the Karnal District of Haryana). "In the early Vedic period, the Sarasvatī probably flowed into the Arabian Sea. Later literature speaks of its disappearance at Vināśana (near modern Sirsa) in Kurukṣetra or Brahmāvarta ( in the eastern Punjab) which is described as the land between Sarasvatī and Dṛṣadvatī." <sup>84</sup>

Thus, it may not be easy to identify the exact place where the Sarasvatī disappeared. But it is nevertheless clear that by the time of the *Pancaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa* the river had dried up.

But, 'when' and 'how' did such a mighty river stop flowing? B.B. Lal answered - "The Mature Harappan settlement at Kalibangan, located on the bank of the ancient Sarasvatī (now going by the name of the Ghaggar), had to be abandoned because of the drying up of the river that was once its life-giver. Radiocarbon dates clearly indicate that Kalibangan came to an end around 1900 B.C. And Since the site had to be abandoned because of the stoppage of water supply from the adjacent Sarasvatī river, it follows that the river dried up some time at the beginning of the second millennium B.C."

Further he answered second query, viz. that of 'how' ? - " To look for the factors that contributed to the disappearance of such

83. *Baudhayana Dharma Sūtra*, I-2-9

84. *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXVII, No.3, p-216

a mighty river as the Sarasvatī we have once again to refer to the excellent evidence marshaled by Puri and Verma in the aforementioned paper. During the life-time of the Vedic Sarasvatī there was a major seismic activity, as a result of which there came up the Bata-Markkanda Divide, which is nearly 30m. in height. The net result was that the Sarasvati could no longer flow westwards into the Adh Badri opening, but had to reverse its direction to the east. And since not far off there was the Yamunā Tear opening, it provided another drainage. The mighty Sarasvatī met her end the hands of the Seismic Demon which, as if, throttled her by the Bata-Markkanda divide and forced her out through the Yamunā Tear. The Himālaya-glacier-fed, perennial Sarasvatī having dried out, what survived was a rain-fed seasonal stream, starting off from the Siwalik foot-hills.”<sup>85</sup>

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85. B.B. Lal, *The Sarasvati Flows on*, p-23-24

#### 4. Rgvedic Gleaning on Sindhu (Indus) Valley Civilization

Until as recently as 1922, ancient Indian history had little actual remains to offer Paleolithic as well as Neolithic finds, and Piprahwa relics which, belong to 5<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. approximately. The antiquity of Indian history and culture as gleaned from Vedic literature is also not supposed to go beyond the second millennium B.C. This was the scenario in spite of the fact that these did exist the Vedas which, even on a conservative estimate of Max Muller, were at least as old as 1200 B.C. But, 1921, the archaeological discoveries at Harappa, Mehenjodaro and other localities in Indus valley have pushed back this limit. India can now lay claim to the honour of being a pioneer of civilization along with Sumer, Akkad, Babylon, Egypt and Assyria.

On the basis of carbon-14 determinations, scholars get some idea of the chronological limits of Indus valley civilization. The Kot Diji culture stratigraphically Pre-Harappan, may have commenced about 2700 B.C. So far, there is no Carbon-14 determination for the early levels of Harappan culture, but it is clear that its end took place about 2000 B.C. at Kalibhangan, at Lothal in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and Mohenjodaro about 1700 B.C.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, when in the 1920 A.D. the Harappan civilization was discovered and dated to third millennium B.C. (on the basis of the occurrence of some Harappan antiquities in already dated contexts in Mesopotamia). It was assumed that, since Vedic civilization (as per the theory of MaxMuller) was only as old as 1200 B.C. The

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1. B.B.Lal, 'A Picture Emerges : An Assessment of the Carbon-14 Dating of the Proto-Historic Cultures of Indo-Pakistan subcontinent' *Ancient India*, Nos. 18-19, 1962-63, pp. 269 to 221.



Harappan civilization could not have been that of the Sanskrit-speaking Vedic people. Since the only other major linguistic group that existed in India was that of the Dravidian-speaking people. It was but natural for Marshall and his colleagues to hold that the Harappan civilization belonged to these latter people.

This view of scholars, regarding the previous 'Aryan Invasion' was theory interpreted in different manner. It is generally believed that the authors of the Indus civilization as speakers of "Dravidian" and their civilization were destroyed by the Aryans, the Vedic people. This view is hold by some scholars on the basis of Ṛgvedic descriptions. Mortimer Wheeler writes- 'The Aryan invasion of the Land of seven Rivers, the Punjab and its environs, constantly assumes the form of an onslaught upon the walled cities of the aborigines. For these cities, the term used in the *Ṛgveda* is *pura*, meaning a 'rampart' 'fort' or 'stronghold' .....Indra, the Aryan war-god, is Purandara, 'for-destroyer'. He shatters 'ninety forts' for Aryan protégé Divodāsa."<sup>2</sup>

Here, an archaeologist, B.B.Lal observes - "During the nine years of excavation at Mohenjodaro altogether thirty-seven skeletons, some fragmentary and some complete, had been found. All these came from lower town, where the commoners lived. None came from the citadel, the seat of government. It may be surprising to know that the 'invaders' spared the rules. Anyway, the more important point is that these skeletons came from different stratigraphic horizons; some from intermediate levels, some from late ones, while yet some others from deposits which accumulated after the abandonment of the site. If

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2. Mortimer Wheeler, *R.E.M.*, 1947. *Harappa* 1946 : The Defences and Cementary R-37. *Ancient India* 3; 58-130, p.82

these people were to die as a result of invasion, it may be expected that the skeletons would all be there in one stratum and that would naturally be the uppermost. Since then the site is said to have been abandoned. Added to the foregoing is the fact that a few of the skeletons bore cut-marks that had healed. Such a healing up is unlikely had the persons concerned, died in a (supposed) warfare. For the death would have been almost immediate, without leaving a long interval for the wounds to heal. And finally, no material remains whatsoever have been found at the site indicative of any warfare or even otherwise associable with any aliens.”<sup>3</sup>

The rejection of Wheeler’s hypothesis of Aryan invasion may be seen in following words : “All that I would like to mention is that the various objections raised against an Harappan-Aryan equation, are ill-founded. It is highly misleading to say that the Vedic Aryan were nomads. The *R̥gveda* itself throws valuable light on the polity of the times, as indicated by the occurrence in it of such terms as *Sabhā*, *Sam̐ti*, *Sāmrāt*, *Rājan*, *Rājaka* etc”.<sup>4</sup> The first two terms clearly refer to assemblies that took vital decisions on matters of public interest, while the latter three terms point to a hierarchy of rulers. In the *R̥gveda*, Abhyāvartī Cāyamāna is referred to as a *Sāmrāt*,<sup>5</sup> and king Citra is said to be a mere *Rājan* and the epithet of other still inferior is *Rājaka*.<sup>6</sup> These distinctions are not imaginary, the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* clearly states- अवरं हि राज्यं परं साम्राज्यम्। (V-I-1-12-13). It means that the office of *Rājan* is lower, and that of *Sāmrāt*, the higher. It is

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3. B.B. Lal, *The Saraswati Flows on*, pp.69-70

4. *Ibdi*, p.70

5. *R̥v.* VI-27-8

6. *R̥v.* VII-21-18

clear that it does not expect such fine distinction of governance in a nomadic society.

Marshall and other scholars consider the Indus valley civilization as different from the R̥gvedic culture. Because the former is ignorant of the horse; but R̥gvedic culture familiar with the horse. The evidence of the horse from Mehenjodaro remains, indicating the use of horse, have been found at Lothal, the famous Harappan site in Gujarat. A.D. Pusalkar says- 'Horse have also come to light from Mehenjodara.'<sup>7</sup> Thus, the knowledge and use of horse were prevalent among the Indus valley people.



Fig.1 Surkotada : Horse Bones.Mature Harappan



Fig.2 Lothal: Terracotta horse. Mature Harappan

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7. A.D. Pusalkar, *Vedic Age*, p.194

There is another argument that the wheel which is referred to in the Vedic texts, is stated to be absent during the Harappan periods. R.S. Sharma writes - 'There is no evidence for a spoked wheel at Harappa or Mohenjodaro where all the toy-carts found so far have solid wheels. Banawali in Hissar district in Haryana is associated with the use of the spoked wheels in the Harappa phase. According to its excavator, R.S.Bisht, a shard depicts a canopied cart with spoked wheels. But the painted shard produced by him shows seventeen parallel lines which appear to be decorative. These lines cannot be considered as spokes, for neither they converge at a hub/central point nor do the distances between them tend to narrow down towards any end.'<sup>8</sup>

On the contrary to these views, B.B.Lal writes - 'The painted lines do converge at the central hub, and thus leave no doubt whatsoever about their representing the spokes of the wheel.'<sup>9</sup>



Fig.3 : Rakhigarhi : Terracotta wheel.Mature Harappan

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8. R.S. Sharma, *Advent of the Aryans in India*, Manohar Publishers, New Delhi0, 1999, p.18-19

9. B.B. Lala, *The Saraswati Flows On*, p.73

In order to determine the true character of the Indus valley people their civilization, it would be useful to study the data furnished by it in the light of the *R̥gveda*, which represents the ancient culture of the 'Saptasindhu' region. Some of the motifs can be compared to some ideas of the *R̥gveda* and correlated to a coherent ideology of life.

One may see, a three-headed figure represented on a seal of Indus valley civilization.



Fig. 4: Mohenjo-daro Pashupati Seal. Mature Harappan

Marshall identifies this figure with Siva.<sup>10</sup> This view supported that *Mahābhārata* traces some epithets for Śiva. These are *triśīrṣa*, *trivaktra* *yogādyakṣa*, *ūrdhvaliṅga*, *Śārdūlarūpa*, *Paśupati*, *triśūla* etc.

T.N. Ramachandran holds that deity has a composite figure consisting of hawk, buffalo and axe. And, in support of this view, he cites the *R̥gveda*, where Soma is described as follows; "Brahma

10. John Marshall, *Mohenjodaro and the Indus Valley Civilisation*, Vol. I Plate XII-17; London, 1931

among gods, a leader of poets, a *Ṛṣi* among sages, a buffalo among animals, a hawk among vultures, an axe among weapons, over the sieve goes Soma with a roar”<sup>11</sup>

P.R. Deshmukh is of the opinion that the god on this seal, represents the three-headed six eyed god described in the *Ṛgveda* as below :

‘Lord of the dwelling, he subdued the demon, who roared aloud, six-eyed and triple-headed. *Tṛta*, made stronger by the might he lent him, struck down the boar with shaft, whose point was iron.”<sup>12</sup>

The three-headed god, called *Dāsa* here, is described as the son of *Tvaṣṭṛ*<sup>13</sup> in the *Ṛgveda*, also in the *Ṛgveda*, the three headed son of *Tvaṣṭṛ* is named as *Viśvarūpa*. *Tvṣṭṛ* is the creator of the universe. He is the 'maker of fair things'; the creator of *Agni*. The three forces of mind (*manas*) life (*prāṇa*) and matter (*vāk*) constituting, the architectonics of creation are his three heads.

Besides the three heads, the figure of the god is shown to be having a pair of horns. In the *Ṛgveda*, I-33-12, the chief *Śuṣṇa* is called *Śṛṅgin* (horned). The horns in question are apparently of the

11. T.N. Ramachandran, Presidential Address to Section I of the Indian History Congress, Ninteenth Session, Agra, 1956, p.7.

ब्रह्मा देवानां पदवीः कवीनां ऋषिर्विप्राणां महिषो मृगाणाम्।

श्येनु गृध्राणां स्वदितिर्वनानां सोमः पवित्रमत्येति रेभन्।

12. P.R. Deshmukh, *The Indus Civilisation in the Ṛgveda*, p. 41

स इद्दासं तुवीरं पतिर्दत्षळक्षं त्रिशीर्षाणि दमन्यत्।

अस्य त्रितो न्योजसा वृधानो विषा वराहमयोऽग्रया इन्।। *Rv.* X-99-6

13. *Rv.* X-8-8

सपित्र्याण्यमुधानि विद्वानिन्द्रोषित आस्यो अभ्ययुद्यत्।

त्रिशीर्षाणं सप्तर्षिं जघन्वान् त्वाष्ट्रस्य चित्रः ससृजे त्रितो गाः।

भूरिदिन्द्र उदिनक्षन्त मोजोऽवाभिनत् सप्ततिर्मन्यमानम्।

त्वाष्ट्रस्य चिद्विश्वरूपस्य गोमामाचक्राणस्त्रीणि शीर्षं परा वाक्।।

bull, the expression *Vṛṣaśipra* (having the headdress shaped like that of a bull), used in the *Ṛgveda*, VII-99-4.

The horns of the bull are prominently figures on the Indus seal. In the *Ṛgveda* the bull symbolises many gods. For instance, (1) Sūrya is represented as a bull supporting the heaven and the earth (X-31-8); (2) the *Vajra* of Indra is called a sharp bull (I-33-13); (3) Indra himself is described as a sharp-horned bellowing bull (X-28-2); (4) Parjanya is compared to the bull roaring other regions (III-55-17); (5) Agni is associated with a bull 'but newly horn' (VII-33-3) ; (6) Rudra is addressed as a tawny bull (III-33-15), etc. In fact, the bull incorporates the fecundity, which is the source of the procreating process of nature, and as such is the emblem of all those deities that represent its various aspects.

Tree-worship is yet another feature that seems to be prevalent during the Harappan times. On a large number of seals we find a deity encased in a tree. Harappan people worshipping the pipal tree, often under the belief that some deity resides in it. In Vedic imagery the *Aśvattha* or pipal tree is the symbol of cosmic creation. In the *Ṛgveda* (X-31-7) both heaven and earth said to have been fashioned from the cosmic tree.



Fig. 5 : Mohenjo-daro: Pipal Twing with Five Branches

A familiar figure from the Indus valley is that of a mother-goddess associated with a fertility cult. Terracotta figurines of this goddess are very common from all Indus sites including Mahenjodaro and Harappa. In the Veda this goddess is known as Aditi, Virāj, Vasupatnī, Viśvarūpā, Vaiśvadevī, Vaiśvadhāyā, Kevalī etc. She is the great principle of motherhood identified with universal nature or infinity. She is described as intact (*anarvā*), widely expanded and extensive, belonging to all men and producing heaven and earth, the mistress of the cosmic order (*ṛta*), principle of boundless and bondless universal nature, the mother as well as the daughter of Dakṣa Prajāpati or the creator in a creative agitation.



Fig. 6 Harappa : Mother Goddess

Thus, it is clear from the above study that there is a fundamental unity in the religious outlook and philosophical conception of the Indus valley culture and the *Ṛgveda*. The entire conspectus of symbolism is common to them.

At this point it may be worthwhile to examine the relationship between the Harappan civilization and the *Ṛgveda* from altogether



different angle. The geomorphological, archeological and radiocarbon dating evidences combine to show the Sarasvatī dried up around 2000 B.C. It is noted above that during the Ṛgvedic times the Sarasvatī was a highly active river, sometimes even breaking its banks. All this clearly shows that the *Ṛgveda* must antedate 2000 B.C. Further, the geographical area covered by the Ṛgvedic people, as is clear from the *Ṛgveda*, from the term 'Saptasindhu' region. Thus, the archaeological culture occupied the 'Saptasindhu' region during the period prior to 2000 B.C. in the Harappan civilization. Thus, the Harappan culture was equalant of the Ṛgvedic culture, and it stands out as the prime source of the subsequent Indian culture.

### 5. Age of the R̥gveda

It is evident, the *R̥gveda* is the most ancient document of the Aryans. It represents a stage of earliest civilization. In respect of the development of language and religion, philosophy etc. still to us the *R̥gveda* represents the most ancient chapter in the history of the Aryan history, which however is explained in the previous chapter.

The age of the *R̥gveda* has been engaging the attention of Vedic scholars for a pretty long time. Various scholars have tried to tackle this question on different grounds. Thus, some scholars have tackled it on linguistic grounds, others on astronomical grounds and geological grounds. But, however, the chronology of the R̥gvedic age still remains a matter of controversy.

According to orthodox view the hymns of the Vedas are a direct revelation from God to seers, and these seers acted as the medium of communication but were in no sense the author of the same.<sup>1</sup> Sāyaṇa also salutes Śiva at the outset of his commentary thus - "I bow down to Maheśvara, the saviour of learning, whose breath was the Vedas and from which proceeding the whole universe."<sup>2</sup> But from a comparative study of numerous *mantras* in the *R̥gveda* as well as some passages of the *Nirukta* and *Anukramaṇīś*, there remains little doubt that the hymns of the Vedas were composed by the sages at the different periods of time.<sup>3</sup> Having examined these two conflicting

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1. ऋषयः मन्त्रदृष्टारः न तु वेदस्य कर्तारः।  
न कश्चित् वेदकर्ता वेदस्मर्तृचतुर्मुखः।। *Parāśara Samhitā*, 1-20
  2. यस्य निःश्वासितं वेदाः यो वेदेभ्योऽखिलं जगत्।  
निर्ममे तमहं वन्दे विद्यातीर्थं महेश्वरम्।। Sāyaṇa on *R̥gveda*, Introduction.
  3. गोतमो इन्द्राव्यमतक्षत्। *Rv.* I-62-13  
इयं गीर्मान्दार्ढ्यस्य। *Rv.* I-166-15  
ब्रह्माणि जनयन्त विप्राः। *Rv.* VII-22-9  
यत् कामः ऋषिर्यस्यां देवतायां अर्थापत्यमिच्छन् स्तुतिं प्रयुङ्क्ते।  
तदैवतम् स मन्त्रो भवति। Yāska, *Nirukta*, VIII-1  
यस्य वाक्यं स ऋषिः। *Sarvānukramaṇīś*-4

statements it may be concluded that the truth underlying the hymn was revealed to the seers who then composed in their own way. These *mantras* are utilised by them in some particular Sacrifices.

In the modern times, the first scholar who attempted to construct a chronology of the Vedic period was Max Muller.<sup>4</sup> Starting on the basis of the wellknown fact that Buddhism presupposes the existence of the whole Vedic literature, he fixed 600 B.C. as the date about which the *Brāhmaṇa* period ended. Assigning 200 years to the *Brāhmaṇas*, 200 years to the composition of the sacrificial *mantras* and the compilation of the Veda, and 200 years to the earliest hymns of the Veda, he fixed 1200 B.C. as the date of the commencement of the Vedic age.

Later on, he pushed back the date to 1500 B.C. of the Vedic age. Next he dismissed his opinion thus- "We cannot hope to fix a time terminus a quo. Whether the Vedic hymns were composed in 1000 or 1500 or 2000 or 3000 years, B.C. no power on earth will ever determine."<sup>5</sup>

M. Bloomfield writes - "It is truly humiliating to students of ancient India to have to answer the inevitable question as to the age of Veda with a meek we don't know....."

Anyhow, it must not be beguiled by that kind of conservatism which merely slaves the conscience into thinking that there is a better proof for any later date, such as 1500, or 1200 or 1000 B.C. rather than the earlier date of 2000 B.C. Once more, frankly, we do not know."<sup>6</sup>

4. Maxmuller, *History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, 1859

5. Maxmuller, *Gifford Lecturers on Physical Religion*, London, 1901, p.91

6. M. Bloom field, *The Religion of the Vedas*, p.18

Many scholars supported Max Muller's theory which dated 1500 B.C. on other arguments of a linguistic nature which were bound to be inconclusive.

"From a purely linguistic point of view the *R̥gveda* in its present form cannot be dated much earlier than 1000 B.C. The language of the *R̥gveda* is certainly no more different from that of the Avestan *Gāthās* than is old English from Old High German and therefore, they must be assigned to approximately the same age."<sup>7</sup>

In this connection Prof. Winternitz has pointed out that "It is impossible to state definite chronological limits within which languages change. Some languages changes very rapidly, others remain more or less unaltered for a long period."<sup>8</sup>

The aid of astronomy has also been taken to fix the chronology of the Vedic period. Both Bala Gangadhar Tilak and H. Jacobi started from astronomical datas found in Vedic literatures and came to the conclusion independent of each other. They say that at the time of the *Brāhmaṇas* the *Kṛttikās* coincided with the vernal equinox but in the Vedic times it is found that vernal equinox was on *Mṛgaśīrāḥ*. From astronomical calculations it is found that vernal equinox fell on the Pleiades about 2500 B.C. and on the Orion about 4500 B.C. From this Tilak concluded that the Vedic text and *Brāhmaṇas* were collected between 6000 and 2500 B.C.

According to B.G. Tilak the oldest period in the Aryan civilization, which may be called the Aditi or the pre-orion period roughly extends from 6000 to 4000 B.C. In this period "the finished

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7. R.C. Mujumdar, *The Vedic Age*, p.207

8. Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*, Vol.I, p.269

hymns do not seem to have been known and half-prose and half-poetic Nivids or sacrificial formule (giving the principle names, epithets, and feat of the deity invoked) were probably in use.

The second period, called the Orion period roughly speaking extended from 4000 B.C. to 2500 B.C. This was the most important periods in the history of the Aryan civilization. In this period a good many *Sūktas* in the *Ṛgveda* were composed and several legends were either formed anew or developed from the older ones. The Greeks and the Parsis appear to have left their common home during the latter part of this period.<sup>9</sup>

But, H. Jacobi, in his own way, arrives at the conclusion that the Vedic texts were composed about 4500 B.C. and extended to 2500 B.C. He was confirmed by another astronomical consideration. It is found in the *Gṛhya-sūtras* that the bride and the bridegroom had to sit upon a bull's hide after reaching their new home till the stars were visible. The bride-groom had to point out the polar star (*Dhruva*) to the bride and ask her to be as strong as the star in conjugal fidelity. In 2780 B.C. the star *Dhruva* was near the pole. The wedding hymn of the *Ṛgveda* (X-85) does not mention this custom. So Jacobi supposes this custom to be post-Vedic. Thus in his opinion the *Ṛgvedic* period lies before 2780 B.C.

V.B. Ketkar says that it found in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* (III-4-1-5) that there was an eclipse when the Jupiter covered the *Puṣyā* star which occurred in 4660 B.C. and therefore the *Ṛgvedic* period must go before that time.

According to some scholars who base their calculations on the *Purāṇas*, the Bhārata war was fought in the year 1921 B.C. and the

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9. Vide, B.G. Tilak, *Orion*, pp.206-208

Vedas were divided and arranged before that time and hence the time of composition of the Vedic hymns does not fit the time given by H. Jabobi or B.G. Tilak.

Dr. A.C. Das proceeding on the basis of geological changes that have taken place they have taken place, says that the time of the R̥gvedic hymns dated the *R̥gveda* as far back as 25000 B.C.

The evidence of archaeology is very important to proving the antiquity of the R̥gvedic period. The Indus-valley civilization is dated by archaeologists, as third millenium B.C.

K.N. Shastri has shown that the Indus valley civilization is Vedic in character. It corresponds to the Middle Vedic period, is represented by the *Atharvaveda* and the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, rather than the early Vedic period, reflected in the *R̥gveda*. To quote his words : "A review of the whole problem, as set forth above, tends to point to the inference that the conditions of life, envisaged in the *Atharvaveda*, are very much in accord with those under which people lived in the Indus Valley some five thousand years ago. From this investigation it would appear that the *R̥gveda* is much older than the Indus Civilization."<sup>10</sup>

In the foregoing pages some equations of the Indus and the R̥gvedic culture are shown. Then, in the R̥gvedic times the Sarasvatī is said to be highly perennial river. The R̥gvedic hymns shows, that the R̥gvedic people were associated with the river Sarasvatī. The Vedic literature clearly refers to the drying up of the Sarasvatī (ex. *Pancaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*, XXV-10-16). The geomorphological, archaeological and radiocarbon dating evidences combine to show that Sarasvatī dried up around 2000 B.C. All this clearly show that the *R̥gveda* can be dated as prior to 2000 B.C.

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10. K. N. Sastri, *New Light on the Indus Valley Civilisation*, Vol. II, Delhi, 1965, p.142

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION (IN RETROSPECT)

The foregoing study of the *Ṛgveda* in its historical perspective makes it evident that the *Ṛgveda* is a treasure of multi-dimensional elements which speak of rich heritage of Indian culture. The secular, philosophical, political and other hymns of the *Ṛgveda* are found to have been the mirror of the history of India.

As an introduction, the **first chapter** in the in the thesis presents a brief survey of the divisions of Vedic literature such as the *Samhitās*, the *Brāhmaṇas*, the *Āraṇyakas*, the *Upaniṣads*. Further, it deals with the main features of six *Vedāṅgās* forming the *Sūtra* section of the Vedic literature.

The *Vedas* as a whole have been recognised as non-human compositions by the traditional scholars. In this respect, the concept of *Apauruṣeya*, is here explained on the basis of valid proofs. Besides, a host of scholars who are otherwise called *Aitihāsikas*, is also found to have traced the historical personalities and other elements to the Vedic sources. In this light, it is indicated, according to the historians the *Vedas* are human compositions relative to place and time. Further, a brief survey of historical compositions in the *Ṛgveda* is also given here

for the convenient understanding of the Vedic hymns in different perspectives.

The **second chapter** includes many suggestive phases of historical elements. At the outset, the ancient commentators of the *Ṛgveda* together with the main features of the respective commentaries have been highlighted.

Under the sub-chapter of the **Geo-historical** elements in the *Ṛgveda*, the thesis unfolds the important aspects of the *Nadī-Stutis* and of some mountains, seas. The *Ṛgveda* mentions the names of about forty rivers, of which, the most frequently mentioned are the **Sindhu** the river *par excellence*, and the **Sarasvatī**. The largest number of rivers is referred to in the *Nadīstuti-Sūkta* of the tenth *maṇḍala*. In the *Ṛgveda*, the Himālaya and the Mūjavan mountains are frequently mentioned.

Further, this chapter gives suggestive elements of the economic history of the *Ṛgveda*. The main occupation of the people in the Ṛgvedic age was agriculture. Cattle-breeding forms an indispensable part of a farmer's life. The *Ṛgveda* mentions various articles, and in that time various industries were also developed. Industrial occupations are - carpentry, pottery, textiles, leather industry, metal industry etc. Trade or transport both inland and seaborne was carried on during the Ṛgvedic period.

In its critical exposition the **third chapter** places the presentation of *Dāśarājna* war, Ṛgvedic tribes, royal kings, *Dānastutis* and the *Ākhyānas*, showing their socio-political and religio-scientific importance during the Ṛgvedic age.



The Ṛgvedic hymns describe the history of the royal kings, like Trasadasyu, Purukutsa, etc, and they are shown bearing the historical importance of that age.

The Ṛgvedic *mantras* containing basic elements of Astronomy, Mathematics, Agriculture, Geography, Metallurgy etc. are the living proofs to show the contribution of Vedic seers to the ancient scientific field.

The **fourth chapter** provides an account of the views of modern scholars eastern as well as western, and they are taken to the touch stone of Ṛgvedic hymns. Such views lacking the support are untenable. For eg. on the basis of valid authoritative Vedic texts, the kings and other leading personalities had been the inhabitance of the '*Saptasindhu*' region, which however is India itself during Ṛgvedic period. In this manner the Indian culture during ancient period reflected in the Ṛgvedic statements inherit rich historical evidences, stultifying the views of modern scholars.

The hymns of the *Ṛgveda* are explained here to show how the Vedic seers have preserved the important historical facts, like Sindhu(Indus) river civilization, Sarasvati river civilization etc. Even today the truth of the Sarasvatī river civilization is being discovered by archeological survey of India. The comparative study of these two civilizations on the basis of Ṛgvedic *mantras* and archeological remains, makes is sufficient to claim that Sarasvatī river civilization was more ancient than Sindhu river civilization.

Evaluating the Ṛgvedic historical facts any researcher might remark that the *Ṛgveda* is a repository of the multi-dimentional visions

of the Ṛgvedic seers. In this regard, any traditional Indian scholar would stick to non-human composition to deal with religio-philosophical concepts of set by the seers; and such text have nothing to do with any history of the socio-political institutions. On the other hand the modern scholars eastern and western, not following the traditional view, collect new ideas and examine them through the historical lines of ancient India. In this manner, there appears to be uncompromising breach between the traditional and modern approach to the understanding of the *Ṛgveda*.

But as a matter of fact one need not keep oneself away from the traditional view on the Vedic literature. It is a known fact that during the ancient period the method of imparting the knowledge to one's student was existed through oral means. But, no kind of writing method was prevailed as in the case of western historical evidences. Following this line of thought there would be no impediment in identifying and ascertaining the historical facts reflected in the *Ṛgveda*. This assertion exhibits the truth that the Vedic seers had penetrating wisdom in all branches of Vedic lore, besides, their proficiency in science of *Brahman*. In this way the Vedic *mantras* are understood in their right sense of purport. The traditional view maintained by Indian scholars does not get vitiated and simultaneously the rich treasure of historical facts becomes more preserved to know that the *Ṛgveda* is still a living force in the fountain of wisdom of the Indians of the past.

In fine it may be adjudicated that the Ṛgvedic seers have brought together in one composite form of Vedic lore, the tradition of UNIVERSAL HISTORY.



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